

PROVINCETOWN ARTS

30TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

us \$15 canada \$19
volume 30
annual issue 2015/16

FEATURING

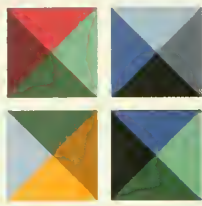


JOHN YAU



PAUL BOWEN





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ADRIAN FERNANDEZ, EPILOGUE SERIES, HAVANA, CUBA, 2012

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TJ WALTON

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MARC JACOBS



Provincetown Art Association and Museum
460 Commercial Street
www.PAAM.org



Provincetown Art Association and Museum, 26 & 51 Jones, Courtesy of Eric Walker Gallery

BERTA WALKER GALLERY

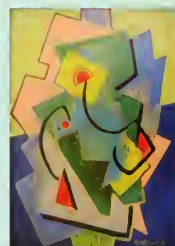
2015 Exhibition Schedule
Artist Receptions are Fridays 6:00-8:00 PM

MAY 22 - JUNE 14

- **SELINA TRIEFF** (1/7/34 - 1/14/15)
Memorial Exhibition
- **HANS HOFMANN**
and students of Hofmann affiliated with
Berta Walker Gallery **RESIKA, HENRY,**
HOROWITZ, JENCKS, LAZZELL, TRIEFF



SELINA TRIEFF



AGNES WEINRICH



BLANCHE LAZZELL

JUNE 19 - JULY 12

- **PENELOPE JENCKS** Beach Series
- On the Cape **ROMOLO DEL DEO, ROB DU TOIT, ELSPETH HALVORSEN, JUDYTH KATZ**
- **Recent Acquisitions, Berta Walker Gallery**
Byron Browne, Oliver Chaffee, Salvatore Del Deo, Marsden Hartley,
Hans Hofmann, Budd Hopkins, Karl Knaths, Blanche Lazzell,
Ross Moffett, Vollian Rann, Paul Resika, Agnes Weinrich



JUDYTH KATZ



PENELOPE JENCKS



ELSPETH HALVORSEN



PAUL RESIKA



ROB DU TOIT

JULY 17-AUGUST 9

- Trio of Friends
VARUJAN BOGHOSIAN
PAUL RESIKA
SIDNEY SIMON
- Mystical Landscapes
BRENDA HOROWITZ
SKY POWER
MURRAY ZIMILES



ROMOLO DEL DEO

ROMOLO DEL DEO, Detail of
maquette, *Figurehead of the Rose*,
commissioned by Provincetown
Public Library honoring
JOSEPHINE DEL DEO and
naming the Library's archives after her



SALVATORE DEL DEO



SIDNEY SIMON

AUGUST 14 - SEPTEMBER 13

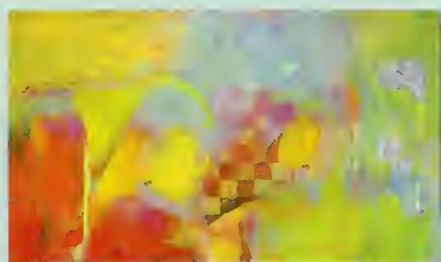
- **JOSEPHINE and SALVATORE DEL DEO**

"The Watch at Peaked Hill" by
Josephine Couch Del Deo,
Schiffer Publishers, with
Salvatore Del Deo paintings

"The Provincelands", Gallery Artists
honoring Josephine Del Deo



VARUJAN BOGHOSIAN



SKY POWER

SEPTEMBER 18 - OCTOBER 11

Grand Scale paintings

Photography Grace Hopkins, David Kaplan,
Susumu Kishihara, John Romualdi

BWG SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **PAUL RESIKA** "Paintings", June 26 - August 30 at PAAM
- **We are proud to announce Romolo Del Deo** has been
Invited to represent the United States in a Pavilion at the
Florence Biennale, Florence, Italy, October 17 - 25

NOW REPRESENTING Varujan Boghosian, Romolo Del Deo, Salvatore Del Deo, Rob Du Toit, Ed Giobbi, Dimitri Hadzi (estate), Elspeth Halvorsen, Robert Henry, Brenda Horowitz, Penelope Jencks, David Kaplan, Judyth Katz, John Kearney (estate), Anne MacAdam, Danielle Mailer, Erna Partoll, Sky Power, Paul Resika, Selina Trieff (estate), Peter Watts, Nancy Whorf (estate), Murray Zimiles

PHOTOGRAPHY Susumu Kishihara, Dana McCannel, John Romualdi, Blair Resika, John Thomas

Berta Walker
GALLERY

GALLERY HOURS July & August 12 - 5 PM, Closed Tuesdays (ALWAYS by appointment) ARTIST RECEPTIONS Fridays 6 - 8 PM

Berta Walker, Curator
Grace Hopkins, Manager

208 Bradford St Provincetown, MA (East End of Town, AMPLE PARKING) 508 487 6411 BertaWalkerGallery.com

FINE ARTS WORK CENTER

in Provincetown

SUMMER 2015 SCHEDULE

READINGS, TALKS & OPEN STUDIOS

free and open to the public

Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday nights 6:30PM

Weekly readings and talks by visiting artists and writers

Thursday nights 5PM

Student night readings and open studios

EXHIBITIONS

HUDSON D. WALKER GALLERY

Openings: Fridays 6-8PM

June 5 – 14

Asian Cultural Council Solo Exhibition

June 19 – July 6

Summer Program New Faculty

July 11 – 26 (private opening)

Summer Awards Exhibition

July 31 – August 16

Michael Mazur: Selected Works

August 7 – 15

39th Annual Auction Preview

Featured Artist Michael Mazur
and the 25th Anniversary of the
New Provincetown Print Project

EVENTS & BENEFITS

Saturday, July 11

6th Annual Summer Awards Celebration

Honoring Daniel Mullin and Elizabeth McCracken

6:30PM cocktails, exhibition and dinner

Saturday, August 15

39th Annual Art Auction

25th Anniversary of the New Provincetown Print Project

4:30-9PM cocktails, hors d'oeuvres and silent auction

6:30PM live auction

Auction Preview, Friday, August 7 6-8PM

SUMMER WORKSHOP PROGRAM

June 14 – August 28, 2015

Week-long classes in
creative writing and the visual arts.

fawc.org/summer

24PEARLSTREET

ONLINE WRITING PROGRAM

Learn from acclaimed writers and poets
wherever you are, whenever you want.

fawc.org/24pearlstreet

FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Seven-month residencies in Provincetown
for emerging writers and visual artists.

fawc.org/fellowships

YEAR-ROUND ACTIVITIES & EVENTS

In addition to an exciting schedule of
special events, the Work Center features
free readings and exhibitions
open to the public, all year long.

fawc.org/calendar

MEMBERSHIP SOCIETY

Support the Work Center and be part
of a dynamic community dedicated
to enriching the future of
contemporary art and literature.

fawc.org/membership

www.fawc.org

24 Pearl Street | Provincetown, MA 02657
508.487.9960 | info@fawc.org



RACHEL GELENIUS, *Metanoia*, 2013, plaster and fabric, 29" x 18" x 15"
Visual Arts Fellow 2014-2015

SUMMER SALON

ROSE BASILE
 ROBERT BEAUCHAMP
 DANIEL BRUSTLEIN
 FRITZ BULTMAN
 PETER BUSA
 OLIVER CHAFFEE
 NANNO DE GROOT
 EDWIN DICKINSON
 DOROTHY EISNER
 GIL FRANKLIN
 WILLIAM FREED
 JIM GAHAGAN
 MARY HACKETT
 JACK HALL
 MYRNA HARRISON
 HANS HOFMANN
 LESTER JOHNSON
 WOLF KAHN
 KARL KNATHS
 SHARLI POWERS LAND
 BLANCHE LAZZELL
 PAT LIPSKY
 CHARLES LITTLER
 GEORGE LLOYD
 MICHAEL LOEW
 PHILIP MALICOAT
 HERMAN MARIL
 GEORGE McNEIL
 JAY MILDER
 ROSS MOFFETT
 ROBERT MOTHERWELL
 JAN MULLER
 SE ONG MOY
 LILLIAN ORLOWSKY
 HAYNES OWNBY
 BOB THOMPSON
 JACK TWORKOV
 ILYA SCHOR
 RESIA SCHOR
 MYRON STOUT
 KENNETH STUBBS
 TONY VEVERS
 E. AMBROSE WEBSTER
 AGNES WEINRICH



E. Ambrose Webster, *Study for Webster House Provincetown*, 1931, oil on artist's board, 15 x 10 inches

ACME FINE ART AND DESIGN

450 HARRISON AVENUE BOSTON MA 02118 TELEPHONE 617.585.9551 WWW.ACMEFINEART.COM

ART STRAND



Francis Olschafskie, "Untitled", 48 x 72 inches, photograph, 2015

**Bailey Bob Bailey, Pam Brown, Kathline Carr,
Philip Malicoat, Breon Dunigan, André Gregory,
Maryalice Johnston, Zehra Khan, Constantine Manos,
Francis Olschafskie, Jim Peters, Anna Poor,
Michael Prodanou, Janice Redman, Bert Yarborough**

494 Commercial Street | entry on Howland | Provincetown MA 02657
508.487.1153 www.artstrand.com

Irene Lipton & Duane Slick

A Conversation



Irene Lipton, *Untitled (1501)*, 2015, oil on canvas, 20 x 20"



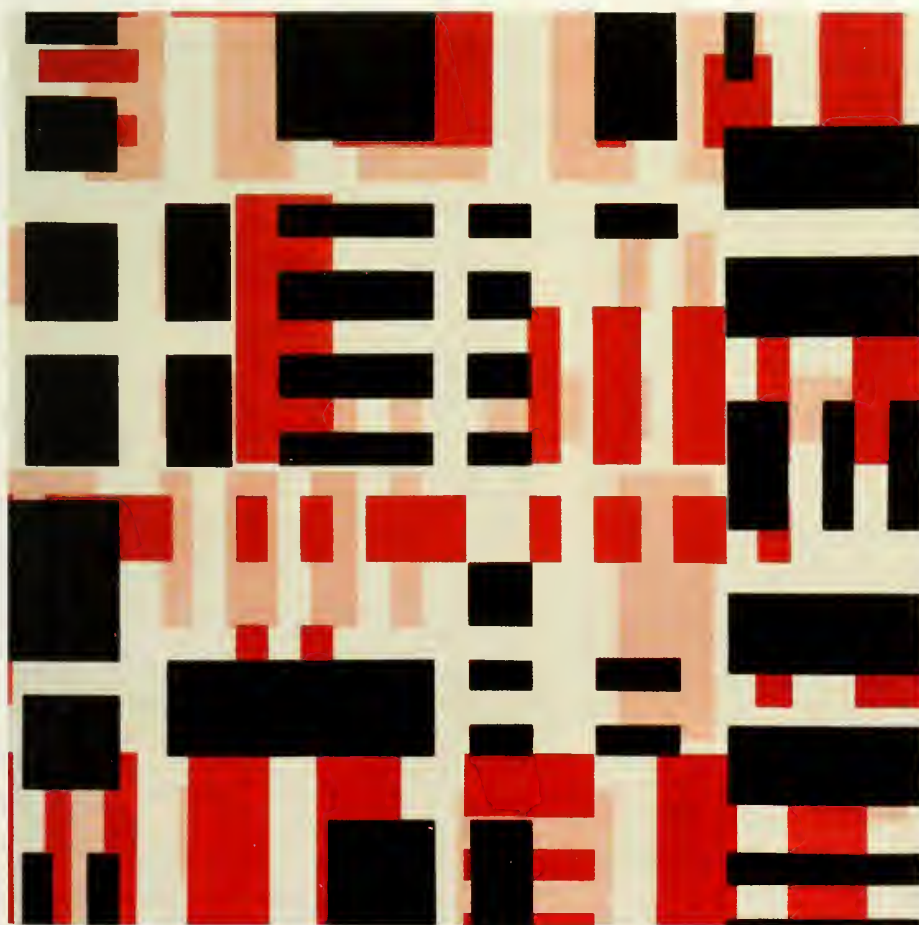
Duane Slick, *Soldier Blue*, 2015, acrylic on panel, 14 x 11"

October 20 – November 8, 2015

Rhode Island School of Design

MEMORIAL HALL GALLERY 226 Benefit Street Providence RI 02903 401.454.6158

both artists are represented by Albert Merola Gallery



Catherine Mosley, *Squared I*, 2015, ink on paper, 28" x 28"

CATHERINE MOSLEY

Up Sideways Down

OCTOBER 15-NOVEMBER 15, 2015

OPENING RECEPTION:
OCTOBER 15, 6-8 PM

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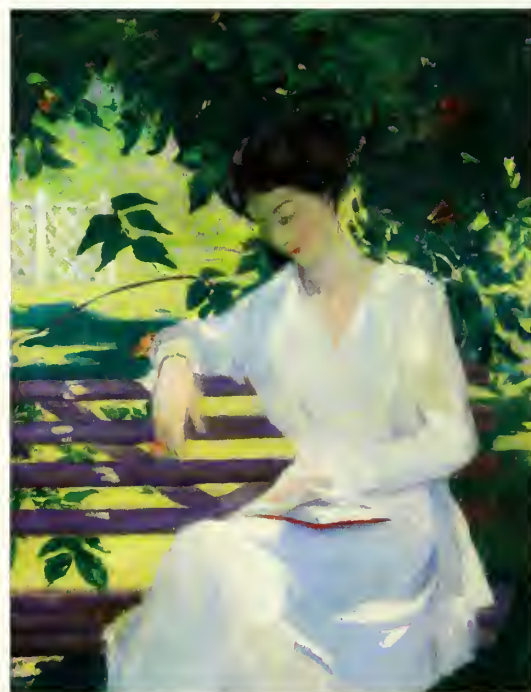


Maurice Freedman

Art Lives On Our Walls



Edward Faiers



Mary Kirkup

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(Across from the Provincetown
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And by appointment
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www.juliehellergallery.com
or find us on [facebook](https://www.facebook.com/juliehellergallery)

Summer 2015 Provincetown—

Light, Palette, Action! Curated by Mary Sherman

Provincetown Art Association and Museum | July 17–Sept 13

Opening reception Friday, July 24 8-10pm

And in August, Maurice Freedman featured at—

Julie Heller East | Aug 14–Sept 3

Opening reception Friday, Aug 14 7pm

Saluting the American Modernist Painter—

- **Julie Heller East**
465 Commercial Street 508.487.2166
www.juliehellergallery.com
- **D. Wigmore Fine Art, NYC**
www.dwigmore.com
- **Greenhut Galleries, Portland, ME**
www.greenhutgalleries.com

MAURICE FREEDMAN



Blessing of the Fleet

1963 oil on canvas
30 x 20 inches

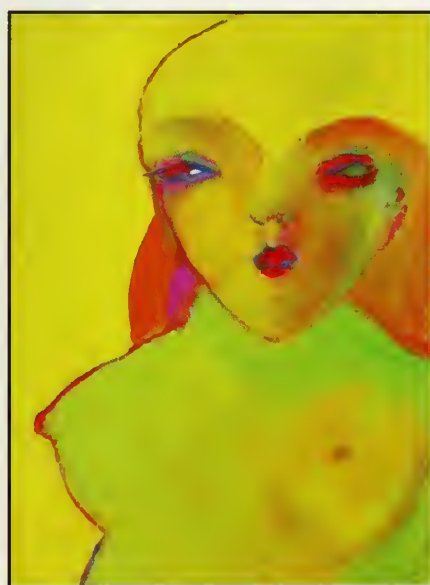
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PAAM 460 Commercial Street 508.487.1750 WWW.PAAM.ORG



Cove Gallery

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John Grillo Memorial Exhibition

Reception July 4th 6 to 8 PM

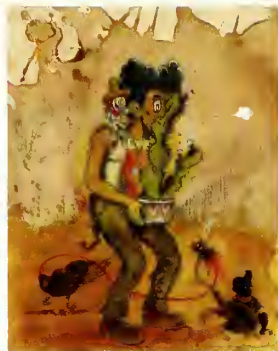
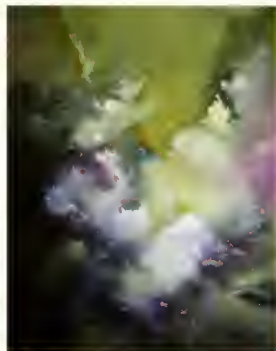
15 Commercial St. Wellfleet 508-349-2530

covegallery.com

ALDEN GALLERY

423 Commercial Street | www.aldengallery.com | T 508.487.4230

Open year round—daily during season



May 22 – June 25:
“Square”—Group Show with all
Alden Gallery artists
June 26 – July 9:
Robert Glisson, Linda Reedy,
Anne Salas
July 10 – July 23:
Paul Kelly, Mike Wright
July 24 – August 6:
Laurence Young, Paul Pedulla
August 7 – August 20:
Joerg Dressler, Heather Toland
August 21 – September 3:
Kevin Cyr, Raúl Gonzalez III,
Robert Morgan
September 4 – September 17:
Alice Denison, Catherine McCarthy
September 18 – January 3:
AUTUMN GROUP SHOW—
Ed Christie, Kevin Cyr,
Cathleen Daley, Alice Denison,
Joerg Dressler, Robert Glisson,
Raúl Gonzalez III, Paul Kelly,
Catherine McCarthy, Robert Morgan,
Paul Padulla, Mark Palmer,
Linda Reedy, Anne Salas,
Heather Toland, Mike Wright,
and Laurence Young.

NOW REPRESENTING THE ESTATE OF HERMAN MARIL



Herman Maril, *Highland Light*, 1948, casein on board, 13 x 18 inches

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Mitchell Johnson

Catalog by request / ptown@mitchelljohnson.com
 Additional paintings and exhibit info / www.mitchelljohnson.com



TOP ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: **NUBBLE**, 2014, 20 X 27 INCHES, OIL ON LINEN, \$7,500. **POGGIBONSI-KIRCHHEIM**, 2014, 18 X 21 INCHES, OIL ON LINEN, \$6,000.

BOTTOM ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: **BORNHOLM PLAID**, 2014, 20 X 27 INCHES, OIL ON LINEN, \$7,500. **ROME (MARCELLO)**, 2015, 22 X 26 INCHES, OIL ON LINEN, \$7,000.

Mitchell Johnson, a 2015 Visiting Artist at the American Academy in Rome, is featured in Meg Smaker's new short documentary, *The Artist of Silicon Valley*.
 All images © 2015 Mitchell Johnson.



Island Colors, oil on linen, 30 x 36 inches

Lillia Frantin

THE CHRISTINA GALLERY 32 NORTH WATER STREET, EDGARTOWN, MV: JUNE 27 "ISLAND COLORS"

JULIE HELLER EAST 465 COMMERCIAL STREET, PROVINCETOWN: JULY 3 "P'TOWN MEMORIES"

CHATHAM FINE ARTS 492 MAIN STREET, CHATHAM/CAPE COD, MA

The artist's full-color book *STUDIO, GARDENS AND THE SEA* is available through the galleries



GAA GALLERY

RODNEY DICKSON

MAY 23 - JUNE 21

THORALF KNOBLOCH

JULY 2 - 19

ERIN WOODBREY

JULY 2 - 19

BARRY STONE

JULY 22 - AUGUST 9

MARTIN MANNIG

AUGUST 12 - 30

Yael BEN-ZION

SEPTEMBER 5 - OCTOBER 11

SOPHIA HAMANN

SEPTEMBER 5 - OCTOBER 11

MEGAN HINTON

EXHIBITION OF NEW PAINTINGS, JULY 19 - 30, 2015



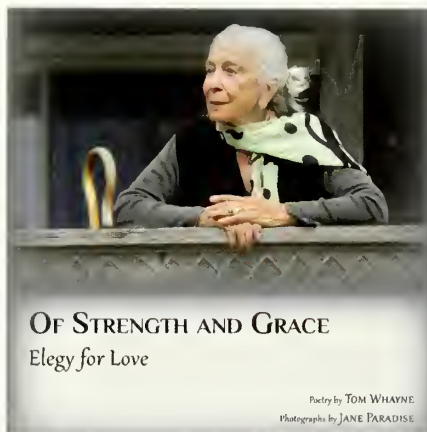
Gray Landing, 2015, oil on linen, 11" x 20"

TAOWATER GALLERY

352 Commercial Street, Provincetown 508-487-8880

1989 Route 6A, W. Barnstable 508-375-0428

taowatergallery.com | meganhinton.com



OF STRENGTH AND GRACE Elegy for Love

Poetry by TOM WHAYNE
Photographs by JANE PARADISE

*Proceeds from the sale of the book
will be donated to PAAM —
available at PAAM, Shanti Arts
Press, and Amazon*

Jane Paradise PHOTOGRAPHY

STUDIO: 4 Fortuna Road
Provincetown MA

415-321-0382

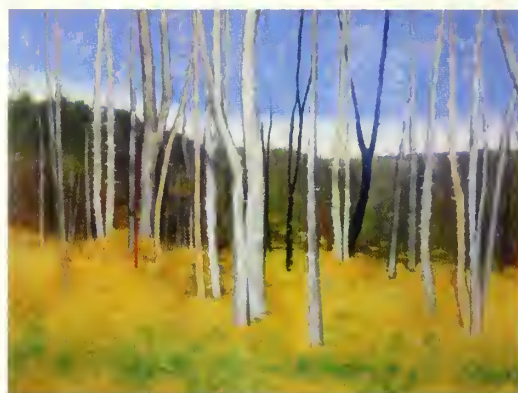
jane@janeParadise.com

Represented by: Galatea Fine Art - Boston MA



THOMAS ANTONELLI Antonelli Giordelli Gallery
416 Commercial Street Provincetown 508 487 9693

Ellen Sinel



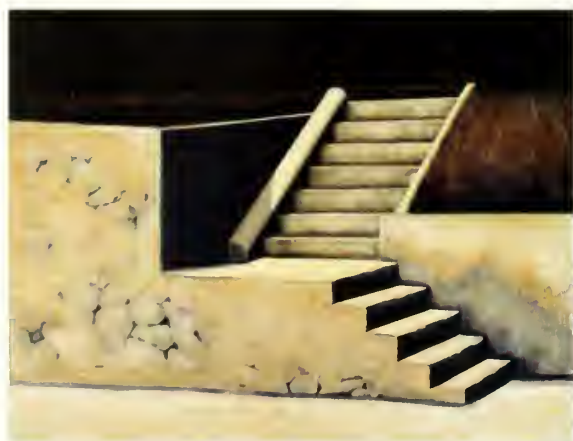
Fall Trees from a Moving Train oil on canvas 40 x 62 inches

www.ellensinel.com

ellensinel@yahoo.com

TRURO STUDIO VISITS BY APPOINTMENT

Ray Wiggs Gallery



432 Commercial Street, Provincetown, MA 02657

774-593-5143 www.raywiggsgallery.com

info@raywiggsgallery.com



Con Bro, oil on linen, 30" x 30"

Kay Knight Clarke

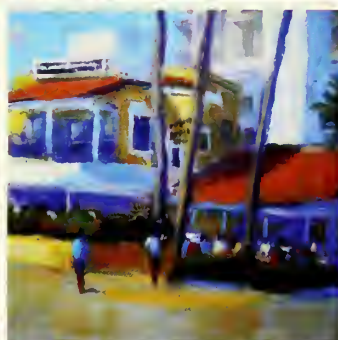
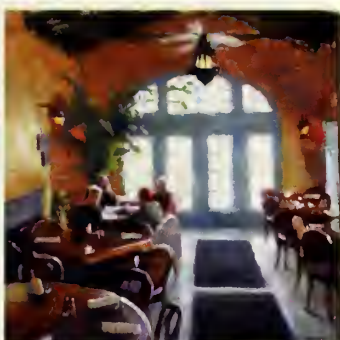
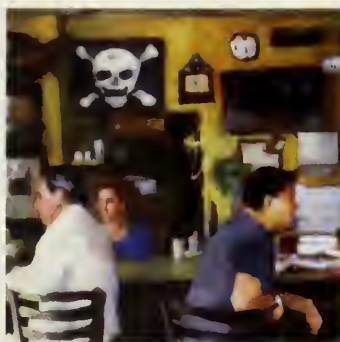
Studio visits: Truro: 508-487-0225, CT: 860-767-0844

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Three Stripes," 2014
30 x 40 inches . oil & digital collage on canvas

RAY ELMAN COMMISSIONED PORTRAITS



"Pictured Above Is At Least One Person Who Loves the
Boston Red Sox and Edward Hopper's House," 2014
60 x 40 inches . oil & digital collage on canvas

WWW.RAYMONDELMAN.COM

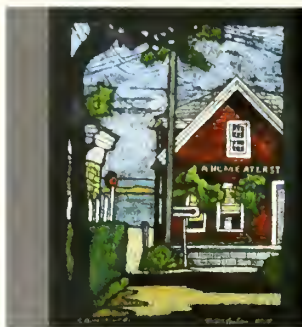
raymondelman@gmail.com

617 . 515 . 2311



JIM'S BAND

Contact: 1-860-383-3306



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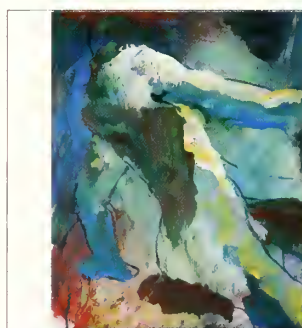
Nancy Nicol

The Works Gallery ~ Wellfleet
Whydah Museum ~ Provincetown
NancyNicolArt.webs.com

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MICHAEL PRODANOU

paintings

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artSTRAND, Provincetown MA
Rossetti Fine Arts, Ft. Lauderdale FL
michaelprodanou.com

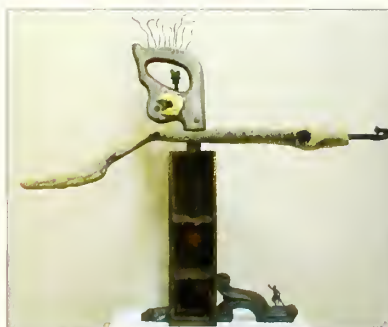
THE BLACKFISH INHERITANCE

by Thomas Wolfson



A son strands himself on family land in Wellfleet, suffocating under the weight of his past as he battles with the ghost of his famously eccentric writer/father.

A novel. Available at Amazon, Booksellers,
and TheBlackfishInheritance.com



Skip Treglia

Visual Artist

Spirits of Land and Sea

studio visits by appt.

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skiptreglia@yahoo.com
www.skiptregliaart.com



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AMP

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Paula Clendenin
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Jeanne-Marie Crede
Michael Cunningham
Katrina del Mar
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Mimi Cross
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Heather Kapplow
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Jicky Schnee
Matt Sesow
Sam Smiley
Amy Solomon
TABBOO! Stephen Tashjian
Champa Vaid
Forrest Williams
Laura Wulf

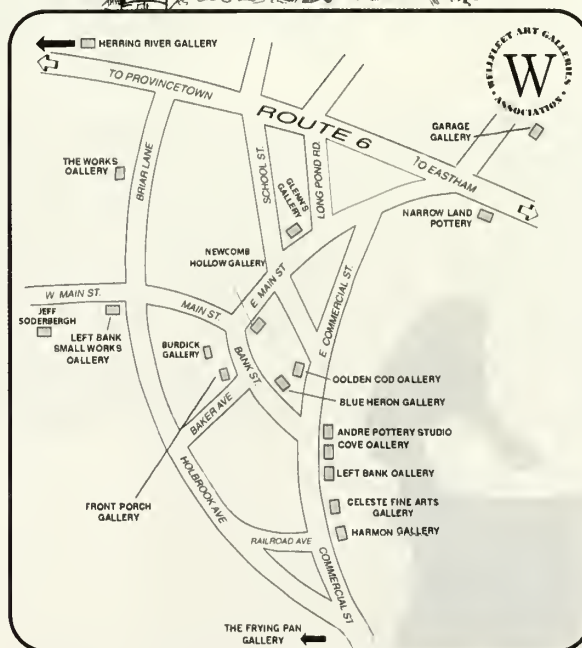
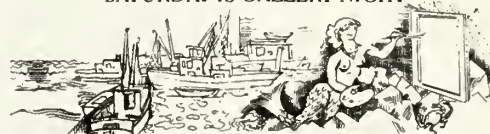
148 Commercial St. • 508.413.9090 • 646.298.9258 cell

WestEnd

a live gallery space

artmarketprovincetown.com
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WELLFLEET The Art Gallery Town "SATURDAY IS GALLERY NIGHT"



Gallery and Restaurant Guide Available

Stroll through the village and enjoy one of the most comprehensive collections of art on Cape Cod. Join gallery receptions on Saturday evenings.

Heather Bruce
New Paintings

September 4 - 17, 2015
Julie Heller East

465 Commercial St. - Provincetown - 508. 487. 2166

Summer Workshops & Special Events at Castle Hill!

detail of Tulips by Lois Dodd

Truro Center for the Arts at Castle Hill offers Summer Workshops in painting, printmaking, drawing, photography, writing, ceramics and much more. See our website for more details or call us at 508.349.7511

SPECIAL EVENTS 2015

JULY 5 Artist's 8" x 8" Smallworks Fundraiser

JULY 19 Mark Bittman Dinner: Get Roasted & Smoked

JULY 28 John P. Bunker Lecture Series w/Ellen Langer

AUG 1 Pamet Float & Family Cookout

AUG 8 Castle Hill Art Silent Auction

AUG 13 Poetry Reading w/ Dorianne Laux & Joe Millar

AUG 20 PoemJazz with Robert Pinsky

AUG 26 Janet Echelman Lecture

AUG 29 Full Moon Gala at Edgewood Farm honoring Anita Walker & Janet Echelman



www.castlehill.org

10 Meetinghouse Rd, Truro, MA 02666 info@castlehill.org

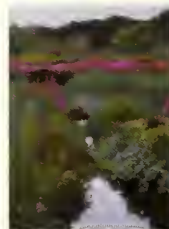
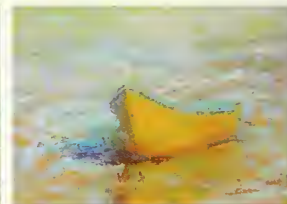


To sign up for classes, visit
CapeSchoolofArt.com

E-mail: info@capecchoolofart.com

Registrar: 617-717-9568

2015 classes in Provincetown:
portrait, figure, landscape, and still life, all in natural light.



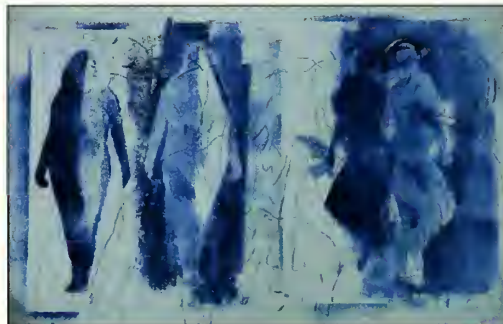
The principles of light and color taught by Charles Hawthorne and Henry Hensche, beginning in 1899, continue today.

Instructors: Boynton, Bruce, Clayton, Giammarino, Neily, Hartwell, C. Egeli, J. Egeli, A. Egeli, McWethy, Przewodek

The Cape School of Art is a non-profit organization.
The School admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin.

MICHAEL PRODANOU
drawings

Represented By
artSTRAND, Provincetown MA
Rossetti Fine Arts, Ft.Lauderdale FL
michaelprodanou.com



Richard Pepitone
Studio

100 Alden Street Apt. 216
Provincetown, MA 02657
Tel: 508.487.4200
richard@pepitoneart.com

CONNEXIONS: New Work by Cherie Mittenenthal

JUNE 5-16, 2015

OPENING RECEPTION: JUNE 5, 7-9pm

Kobalt Gallery
366 Commercial St
Provincetown, MA

Janine Carney-Savage

Represented by
Four Eleven Studio
Provincetown MA
617-283-8161



JOE TREPICCIONE

Hutson Gallery 432 Commercial Street, Provincetown 508.487.0915 HutsonGallery.com



photography
peterromanelli.com

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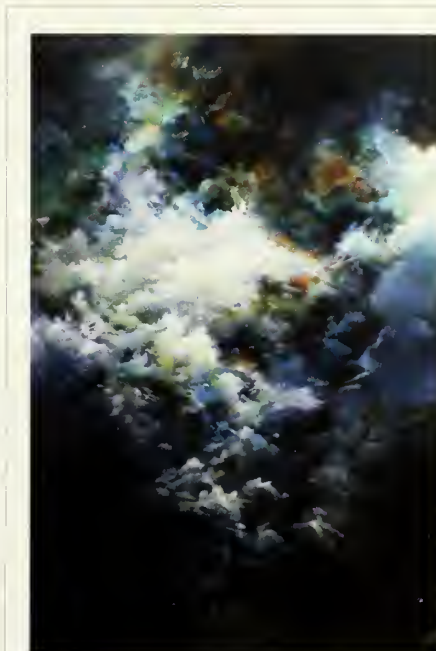
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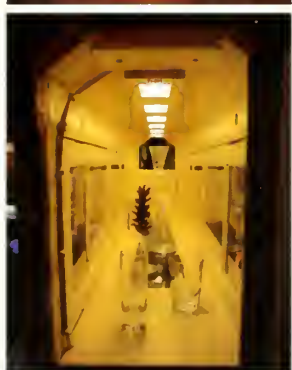
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John Yau and Paul Bowen, *photographs by Phil Smith*

Paul Bowen, "O" Shelf (*detail*), 2013, wood and fabric, 28½ by 25 by 7½ inches

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PROVINCETOWN ARTS

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Each year, *Provincetown Arts* honors within its pages dozens of artists who inspire through their lives and work. And every year, there are also stories about groups and people who display a special kind of courage—I will call them “pioneers.”

In this issue, we read about American pioneers in the colonial New York of 1757 in our James Jones fiction award winner, “Yet Wilderness Grew in My Heart.” In the Theater section, we celebrate the centennial of the founding of the Provincetown Players, the ground-breaking theater group that helped to establish Provincetown as a center of Modernism in the arts and launch the careers of playwrights Eugene O’Neill and Susan Glaspell. Joan Lebold Cohen tells the story of five Chinese artists who have risked censure, and even their freedom, in order to express themselves through their extraordinary art. And the fight for freedom is clearly depicted in the work of Rowland Scherman, the first photographer of the Peace Corps, who illuminated the turbulent ’60s with his iconic photography.

I suppose pioneering is a way of life on the Cape, part of its heritage—after all, the Pilgrims landed here in 1620 (making their first landfall in the New World, by the way, before they set foot in Plymouth). Which leads me to a question: what is the difference between a pioneer and a pilgrim? Pioneers are travelers and innovators who inspire through example and the effects of their journeys. But for pilgrims, who may also travel thousands of miles, there is another element to the journey—there’s the quality of a sacred voyage, or a journey of the soul.

And this thought brings me to the work of our featured artists, Paul Bowen and John Yau. Bowen—who grew up in Wales, lived in Provincetown for thirty years, and now resides in Vermont—creates sacred spaces in his work, using found objects, including many pieces of salvaged wood he has found while beachcombing along Provincetown shores. His use of indigenous materials is a form of transfiguration, an homage and a legacy for people and place. John Yau, whose parents emigrated from China, experiences his own journey through a unique exploration of words, seeking meaning through an interpretation of language, which he expresses in his extraordinary poetry, fiction, and art criticism.

One story that has particularly touched me this year is Melanie Braverman’s beautifully crafted interview with a journalist who has Alzheimer’s disease. He is seeking something unique that has been lost—memory, which is to say words, history, his own life and legacy. It is excruciating and courageous, and I can’t help but feel there is also something profoundly sacred in being set adrift, ultimately trusting that we will be carried where we need to go. There is great power in the silences and spaces, in the not knowing. This is where journeys begin.

And perhaps it is in our seeking—for the perfect piece of wood, the perfect form, the perfect word—and not in the finding, that we fulfill our destinies. Perhaps this is the place where identity and truth begin.

We are privileged at *Provincetown Arts* to share the stories of so many who inspire us through their journeys, some continuing, others completed but not lost—never lost—in the remembering.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Susanna". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Susanna Ralli
Senior Editor

ARTISTS

The venerable **Carmen Cicero**, youthful in his eighth decade, treated his fans to a show of early paintings and watercolors this spring at the June Kelly Gallery in New York. His noir figures seem to be awakened from nightmares: *Man with Mask* offers us the stunned profile of a man in a detective's green fedora, his face disguised behind a clownish orange mask. When the artist was asked who was behind the mask, he confessed it was his friend the famed colorist Paul Resika. When asked about his choice of colors, Cicero responded, "Color, what color? I'm color-blind."



Carmen Cicero, *Man with Mask*, 1987, acrylic on canvas, 24 by 20 inches

Artist **Bill Evaul** is the curator of an exhibition at the Pilgrim Monument and Provincetown Museum, *The Fine White Line: Faces Behind the Prints*, celebrating the centennial of the founders of the White Line Print in 1915, when a group of artists became fascinated by the technique introduced by B. J. O. Nordfeldt for producing a print from a carved woodblock that required only one impression to imprint multiple colors—so unlike the Japanese prints that were the rage of the period, where each color required separate pressings. Six artists formed the original group of printmakers: Nordfeldt, Blanche Lazzell, Mildred McMillen, Ada Gilmore, Ethel

Mars, and Maud Squire. They stayed on after the summer and emerged to lead a revolution in printmaking the following year, attracting dozens of followers, including Ferol Warthen, Juliette Nichols, Agnes Weinrich, and William and Marguerite Zorach. Following a major exhibition at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, their groundbreaking prints have risen in value from a few dollars to many thousands.

Susan Lyman grew up in the Midwest, where farmers would measure time by the growth of their crops: "Corn was knee high by the fourth of July," she recalled. Living on the Cape since 1981, Lyman is mindful of how forms found in nature mimic human gestures, and she has drawn inspiration from dense tangles of bittersweet vines, root masses, and the biomorphic branching of trees. Her favorite book



Susan Lyman, *Hole in One (for Conrad)*, 2014, maple, 8 by 9 by 7 inches

is John Fowles's *The Tree*, in which the novelist reflects, "Art and nature are siblings, branches of the one tree." Her exhibition this spring at the Boston Sculptors Gallery, *The Body of Nature*, offered numinous insight and witty transformations into how wood can articulate metaphors that speak to our physical forms. A signature piece, *Hole in One (for Conrad)*, has nothing to do with golf, although the shapes carved in the surface suggest the topography of a golf course with sand traps. The piece—dedicated to the late Conrad Malicoat, who once gave Lyman a chunk of maple to work with—was created when Lyman removed the bark, then carved, sanded, and coated it with matte varnish to make it more compelling or, in her words, "strange and sexy."

Cherie Mittenthal, executive director of the Truro Center for the Arts at Castle Hill, has announced that the arts organization has signed a contract to purchase Edgewood Farm, an eleven-acre property of pristine woodlands and rolling hills that abut the National Seashore. The building will greatly expand the community function of Castle Hill, offering much-needed new



Edgewood Farm, Truro

space for artists' residencies, workshops, and events with Outer Cape cultural organizations. Castle Hill has begun a capital campaign that was kick-started by a \$600,000 grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council's fund to finance significant improvements to facilities. This summer, Castle Hill will again offer workshops in visual arts and writing by esteemed artists and writers. Edgewood Farm, owned by the family of Eleanor Meldahl, a founder of Castle Hill, is, as board president Kim Kettler said, "a fantastic win-win for the community, bigger than just a fabulous new phase for us."



Jennie Livingston (left) and Debbie Nadolney at the opening of Jennie's show at AMP PHOTO BY JANICE ARAKAKI

Debbie Nadolney launched Art Market Provincetown (AMP) in 2012, inspired by years in Boston and New York, where she collaborated with artists, sculptors, photographers, musicians, filmmakers, video artists, and poets to create multimedia exhibitions and presentations. For years, she also performed in a rock band, inspired by the interaction with live audiences, an excitement that fuels her mission now at AMP. Every two weeks throughout the summer, AMP presents installations, poetry readings, and "happenings," a term that gained currency in the mid-1950s when Allan Kaprow staged performances at the Sun Gallery in Provincetown. AMP carries on the tradition of the legendary Sun, mixing an array of disparate talents, including Cindy Sherman Bishop, Jennie Livingston, Tim McCarthy, Jicky Schnee, Melanie Braverman, Michael Cunningham, Richard Dorff, Karen Cappotto, Jessica Jacobs, Bobby Miller, Kate Clinton, Mark Adams, and Mimi Gross, who actually showed at the Sun Gallery when she was married to the artist Red Grooms.

Victor Powell, whose workshop is hidden away above the Old Colony Tap on Commercial



Victor Powell's version of the Birkin bag, 2014



Janice Redman, *Covert Utility Series (Teapot)*, 2014, mixed media: cotton, thread, muslin, wax, stain, found objects, 5¼ by 8 by 6 inches COURTESY OF CLARK GALLERY

Street, with an unobstructed view of the harbor and busy MacMillan Pier, has worked in leather for forty years, making handcrafted sandals, belts, jackets, and bags for men and women. Last year, he was commissioned to make a Hermès Birkin-style bag, one so coveted that customers who are willing to pay up to \$50,000 are obliged to wait, sometimes years, to get high enough on the list to have an order fulfilled. Hermès artisans train two years before they can make a bag. Powell watched a video detailing how the bags are made, discovering that he had been, for decades, using the same classic techniques. He made the pattern exact to one-sixteenth of an inch. Using genuine alligator, he punched holes for stitching with waxed thread, dried the edges, and burnished and buffed the bag, which took 120 hours. Materials alone cost \$4,000, and the final product sold for \$10,000, far below commercial cost. He signed the bag and sent it to his customer, who was so delighted she cried on the phone.

Janice Redman, born in the north of England, absorbed the arts and crafts of local traditions in needlework and tinkering. Textiles and sheep's wool, woven into cloth, abounded about her. Her mother was a seamstress and lace-maker; her father's passionate hobby was repairing clocks. She arrived in Provincetown as a Fellow in sculpture at the Fine Arts Work Center, where she held a coveted second-year Fellowship, settled into the community, and married the painter Rob DuToit. Her work is imbued with a connection to her childhood, which she expresses by wrapping, padding, protecting, or preserving with heavy cloth fabric or mattress ticking selected objects that possess personal meaning, such as silver spoons, cups, kitchen cutlery, faded photographs, and smudged diarist jottings. This ritualistic process is her way of keeping mementos alive with vital memory. A recent piece, *Teapot*, was exhibited this spring at the Clark Gallery in Lincoln. A pale-green celadon ceramic kettle is encased in white wool, which is fitted snugly around the vessel, as if to keep it warm, and stitched around the circumference with dark thread sealed with wax. The piece achieves resonant potency, like a swaddled newborn, combining affection and domesticity, where daily tedium is transformed into a treasure. This summer Redman will exhibit at artSTRAND.

John Waters has a serious addiction to Provincetown, having spent the last fifty summers here, returning annually for inspiration about how to stay wacky after all these years. "I first hitchhiked here," he explains, "when I was sort of asked not to graduate onstage with my high school. I made my first movie then, *Hag in a Black Leather Jacket*." Many movies later, the filmmaker has evolved into a complex artist who writes best-selling books, performs stand-up comedy, and exhibits his visual collages in major art galleries, most recently in New York at Marianne Boesky Gallery and this summer in London. He will again have a few provocative pieces in Provincetown at the Albert Merola

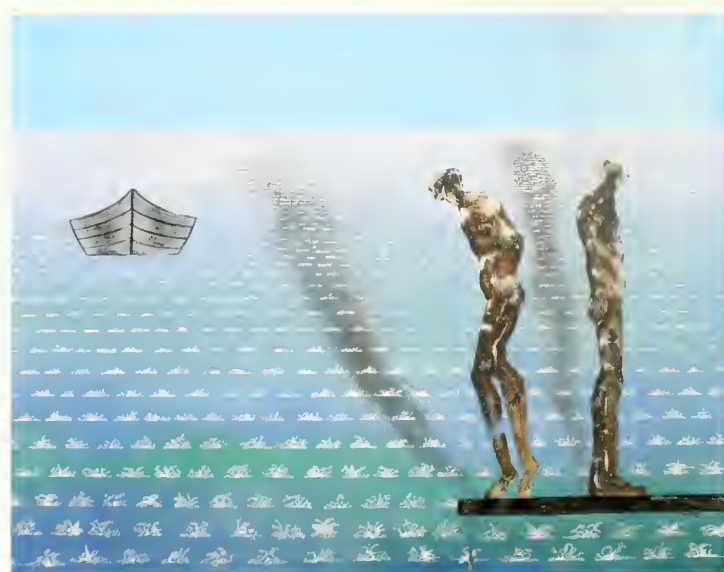
Gallery, where he feels at home among friends. Recently, he was celebrated by the Film Society of Lincoln Center with a retrospective of all his films. Now sixty-eight, the auteur told the *New York Times*, "This is the first time I'm being honored without irony. It's like being alive at your own funeral." His show this spring at Marianne Boesky parodied his celebrity persona as *Beverly Hills John*, utilizing self-portraits derived from caricatures of plastic surgery. One piece in particular, *National Brainiac*, centers on the idea that celebrity is the last obscenity available to the art world. In grotesque, campy, and kitschy-cute headlines and photos, he portrays the agony of Joyce Carol Oates suffering from writer's block, the decadence of the aged W. H. Auden posing in the nude, and the incongruousness of Philip Roth dating a seventy-year old matron. In his intellectual examination of popular culture, Waters explains, "I get the *Globe*, I get the *National Enquirer*, and I get the *Star*. But at the same time I get in the same mailbox the *New York Review of Books* and *Artforum*. That's what gave me the idea. When I saw them in the same mailbox where they have been mingling and having to give each other dirty looks, I imagined, 'What if these two magazines had sex?' We would have *National Brainiac*, and I would like to be the editor of that."

Michelle Wojcik, director of Galería Cubana, with locations in both Boston and Provincetown, had been traveling to Cuba to meet with her artists well before the recent thaw in December 2014, when President Obama lifted travel sanctions for Americans. Until then, she was one of thirty individuals or groups in this country with licenses to visit for educational exchange. Previously, Wojcik had lived in Havana, working for the World Policy Institute and doing research for a PhD in anthropology at New York University. She abandoned academia when she came to value the role art played in bypassing Cuba's isolation, in a city she says is "surreal," the streets vibrant with visual movement, yet creaking with boxy American-made automobiles from the fifties, chrome rusting and whitewall tires smudged with stains. "Artists are obliged to do a lot with very little," she says. Lacking charcoal, some use chalk. Lacking paper, others repurpose old wallpaper. Doctors and professors are paid government salaries of \$26 a month. Some professions are privatized. Driving a taxi, renting a room, or opening a small restaurant can add to one's income. Artists, too, have opportunities for the advancement that Wojcik fosters. A haunting painting by the artist Edel



John Waters, *Brainiac*, 2014, C-print, 36 by 29 inches
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND MARIANNE BOESKY GALLERY, NEW YORK

Bordón, *Barco del Mediodía (Boat of MIDDAY)*, shows the Janus face of insular existence, looking both forward and backward, with shadows cast across a wide sea, a sign of hope signaled by a vessel far offshore.



Edel Bordón, *Barco del Mediodía (Boat of MIDDAY)*, 2014, oil on canvas, 31½ by 39 inches

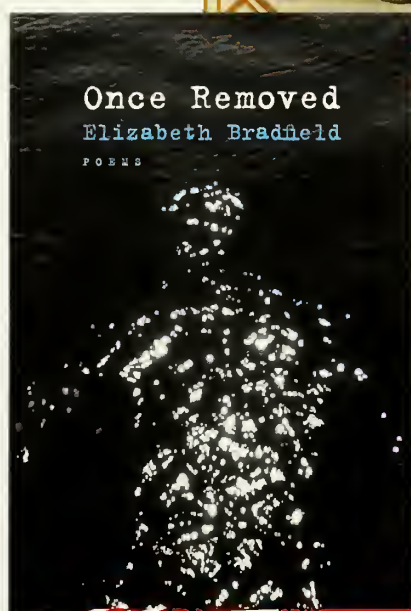
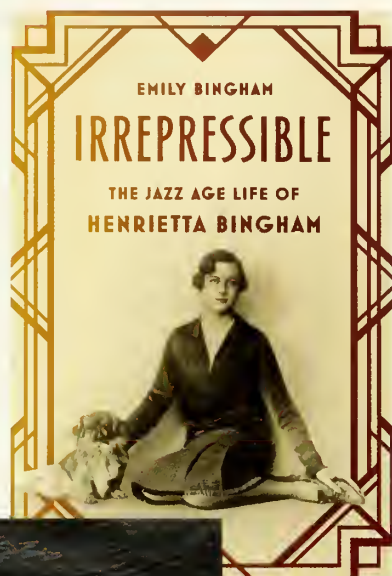
WRITERS

Emily Bingham, author of *Irrepressible: The Jazz Age Life of Henrietta Bingham* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015), recalls her fascination with her great-aunt, born in 1901, a Southern debutante and female rebel wealthy enough to disdain the conventional morality of her Kentucky heritage and migrate to the Bloomsbury Group in London that magnetized around Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell. With a seductive voice and striking violet eyes, she mesmerized men and women, singing songs in the studio of the English artist Duncan Grant that recalled the black culture of her childhood. She identified with the marginalized African-American community and promoted black performances.

Emily Bingham writes, “Henrietta’s younger brother, my grandfather, used to take us kids to Provincetown from Chatham, where the family spent summers. His utter delight in the town’s sexual counterculture always struck me, and now that I know more about the 1920s, it makes sense. Henrietta flew very high with the Bloomsbury Group, in the Harlem Renaissance in Manhattan, and amid the bisexual and lesbian theater circles on both sides of the Atlantic.”

Elizabeth Bradfield’s third book of poems, *Once Removed* (Persea Books, 2015), includes a poem inspired by the Provincetown sculptor Janice Redman, “At Sea,” where the refrain *at sea* concludes many of the water-washed stanzas, offering a connection between life rafts and the survivors’ call for help—“Mayday, mayday, mayday, the bright dance circling a pole, the call, / from the French *m’aider* and which is always sincere at sea.” There is a book launch party at artSTRAND on August 19, on the occasion of Redman’s exhibition.

Nick Flynn, the poet and best-selling memoirist, appeared on our cover in 2006, shortly after he had published *Another Bullshit Night in Suck City*, his mesmerizing chronicle of his mother’s painful suicide and his father’s heartbreaking homelessness. That story was then made into the movie *Being Flynn*, starring Julianne Moore and Robert De Niro, who portray Nick’s parents. Flynn followed up the surreal tale of the making of the movie with another memoir, which he called *The Reenactments* (W. W. Norton, 2013). The deep wisdom and psychological achievement that was the working through of profound trauma was once again undergone with increased crystalline poignancy, astonishing in the maturity of its accomplishment. If a poet is one who uses the crystal model of key life



images, again and again discovering their force refreshed, then Flynn is proof of the utilitarian value of great art, serving the self with language that saves. Flynn gathers dozens and dozens of uncanny meanings, reenacting emotions still vibrating with urgency and power. He writes:

For a while after my mother died, a few years, I kept a postcard near me—a stop-motion photograph of a bullet caught mid-flight, just after having pierced an apple. . . . The photograph . . . is from a series of stop-motion photographs—a drop of milk making a white crown in a glass, a match head as it ignites. As might be expected, the entry hole into the apple is clean, but the exit wound has blown the skin all to shit. This apple is my mother, I’d think, holding her in my hands.”

Jean Gibran is the author of *Love Made Visible: Scenes from a Mostly Happy Marriage*, which includes a forward by Charles Giuliano and an afterword by Katherine French (Interlink Books, 2014). Gallery owner Stuart Denenberg comments, “For over

fifty years I have been part of Jean and Kahlil Gibran’s life. . . . In this narrative of an extraordinary Boston couple, Provincetown occupies a significant place. As Charles Giuliano wrote, ‘Kahlil was present during the seminal events of Forum 49 in 1949, and close to the poet, artist, and jazz man Weldon Kees, who helped organize the summer-long seminar that examined the development of the New York School. . . .’ *Love Made Visible* speaks of the burden and the blessing of sharing the name of an international figure. From libidinous Provincetown to Brahmin Boston, it is valuable as documentary, riveting as gossip, and precious as confession.”

Helen Harrison, director of the Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center in East Hampton, New York, is the author of a new monograph, *Jackson Pollock* (2014), published by

Phaidon Press in its Focus Series of cogent introductions to major contemporary artists. Harrison is uniquely positioned to place Pollock’s creative process in the context of his milieu, including interactions with colleagues, his aesthetic and psychological struggles, and the influences of landscapes on his abstract paintings. This property in East Hampton, adjacent to Acabonac Creek, gave quietude to the artist’s turbulent energy, and Harrison, reflecting on Pollock’s genius, has offered her insights in such earlier books as *Such Desperate Joy: Imagining Jackson Pollock* (2000) and *Hamptons Bohemia: Two Centuries of Artists and Writers on the Beach* (2002), with Constance Ayers Denne. Pollock spent the summer of 1944 here, and one painting, *Beach Figures*, clearly shows how human forms can spring from unconscious impulses. Harrison opens her new book:

The art of Jackson Pollock embodies the dynamism that permeated American culture in the mid-twentieth century. . . . Far from being calculated to shock, Pollock’s liquid medium was crucial to his pictorial aims. It proved the ideal vehicle for the mercurial content that he sought to communicate: “energy and motion made visible—memories arrested in space.” Such fleeting themes required a novel approach; as Pollock put it, “new needs need new techniques.”

Hayden Herrera, the author of esteemed biographies on artists Frida Kahlo and Arshile Gorky, appeared on the cover of *Provincetown Arts* in 2003. Her biography of Kahlo had just been made into the movie starring Salma Hayek. We began by observing that her books seem written to be made into movies, moving from scene to scene, and building up a picture with bits of information while isolating key points—in the manner of a spotlight focusing on an actor onstage. Indeed, Herrera said, “I felt that if I had a movie camera I would choose to stand and shoot in such and such a corner of the room.” Her superbly written new biography, *Listening to Stone: The Art and Life of Isamu Noguchi* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015), incisively portrays the uncanny originality of this sculptor, born in California. Noguchi’s early academic sculpture was radically influenced when he first saw work by Constantin Brancusi, exhibited in 1926 in New York. Noguchi said he was “transfixed” by how proportions between geometry and organic shapes were resolved.

Shortly afterward, Noguchi moved to Paris expressly to meet Brancusi, becoming his assistant, which launched the young prodigy on an international career. Noguchi had spent some childhood years in rural Japan, collecting wildflowers for a little garden by his house. He also selected some rocks, Herrera writes, “to give a feeling of weight and permanence.” Later in life, when he made a Zen-like garden for a commission in Paris, he lingered for hours in mountains, listening for stones that spoke to him. His Modernistic aesthetic was deeply imbued with natural processes. He wrote, “Have you noticed when watching a flame or when watching a storm at sea that Nature never appears to overexert herself?—an infinite reserve seems to linger in even its ultimate thrust.”

Ada Katz, the wife of Alex Katz and longtime model for many of his ethereal portraits, is the editor of *Eight Begin: Artists’ Memories of Starting Out* (Libellum Books, 2014), a collection of eight interviews with her husband’s contemporaries as they were beginning their careers, moving to New York, and finding a supportive community in the artist-run cooperatives that popped up along Tenth Street, such as the Tanager, showing beside the illustrious artists from the prestigious uptown galleries. Included are Ronald Bladen, Lois Dodd, Sally Hazelet Drummond, Al Held, Alex Katz, William King, Philip Pearlstein, and George Sugarman. Alex Katz recalls his formative years as a student at Cooper Union:

The only things I had any security about was that I thought I could draw well, and I thought I could letter well. I thought I knew lettering. In both, I found I was very wanting. . . . The first time I lettered in my class, my teacher, Nathaniel Farmer, told me I was going to have a terrible time in his class. He was right. Lettering is like abstract drawing, I found out. He said, “You worked very hard, but you haven’t had childbirth yet.” I got a C.

Robert Jay Lifton, a psychiatrist who founded a form of inquiry known now as “psychohistory,” was featured on our cover in 2007. For decades, he has convened the celebrated Wellfleet Meetings in his large, tree-sheltered study deep in the Wellfleet woods. For three days in early October, approximately thirty historians, psychologists, international reporters, novelists, poets, and political activists present papers and discuss issues centered on an annual theme. As it was last year, the group focus this fall is on climate change. Bevis Longstreth, a lawyer, writer on climate change, and former SEC commissioner, likened the issue to a frog, submerged in a pot of water slowly being brought to a boil, that does not perceive its peril, remaining oblivious until too late. Scott Knowles, historian of disaster at Drexel University, observed that the “slow-motion apocalypse” of a long-term event is hard to conceive of as a disaster, which typically describes something sudden, unexpected, and

LISTENING TO STONE THE ART AND LIFE OF ISAMU NOGUCHI HAYDEN HERRERA



local, like hurricanes or forest fires. Lifton spoke of how climate-change deniers and falsifiers undergo a form of “doubling,” part of their minds believing the opposite of what they know to be real. Lifton spoke of how climate change is all-encompassing. Nobody is free from it. No place on earth offers sanctuary. If we have limited ability to imagine future generations, however, we can find a source of hope in a concerted effort to be mindful that, as one slogan read in the huge rally in New York last fall, “We Did Not Inherit the Earth from Our Ancestors—We Borrowed It from Our Children.”

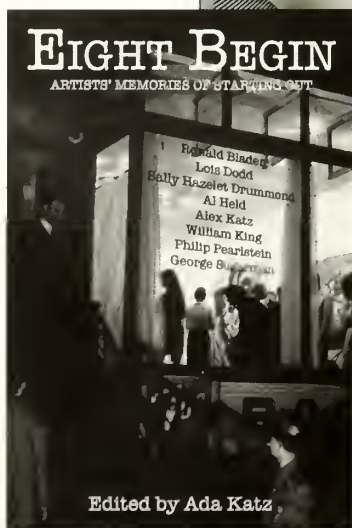
Enthusiastic responses to **Mary Maxwell**’s omnibus collection, last year’s *The Longlook Overlook: A Review of the Arts*, poured in from diverse quarters: Albert Goldbarth described it as “clever in title, lively in look and format, and beautifully written throughout”; David Lehman wrote that it is “a stunning and ambitious achievement”; and Harry Mathews (to whom the volume is dedicated) hailed it as “audacious and impressive.” The volume’s editorial concept (with contributions uncredited in its table of contents) was based on the belief that much writing is shackled by the mere name of its creator; preconceptions about authorship (issues of celebrity or gender, for example) prevent excellent work from being published and read. The result? A niftily designed “paper utopia” (poetry and prose, translation and cultural criticism in multivoiced dialogue) that dances nimbly on

tiny barroom tabletops and across acres of ballroom floors, blending contemporary culture and sophisticated Old World vitality in one splendidly readable package.

Cookie Mueller, born “Karen,” got her nickname before she could walk. Her fascinating life is profiled in a new biography, *Edgewise: A Picture of Cookie Mueller* (Bbooks Verlag, 2014) by Chloé Griffin. The book’s epigraph is a quotation from “Provincetown—1970s,” one of Mueller’s essays: “Why does everyone think I’m so wild? I’m not so wild. I happen to stumble onto wildness. It gets in my path.” Mueller, a Baltimore native, found her way to Provincetown as a cast member in early films by John Waters, including *Female Trouble*, which got its name after the film-

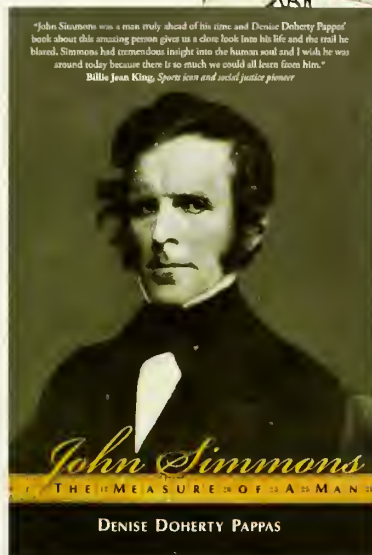
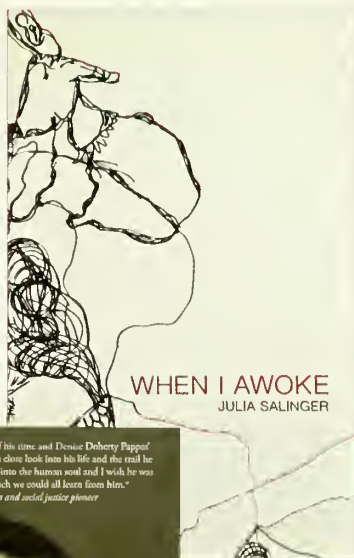
maker visited his star in a hospital. “What happened, Cook?” Waters asked. Cookie replied, “Just a little female trouble.” Mueller’s life, which ended at age forty, is told in interviews with her many friends, but she may be remembered most as a writer of books, such as *Fan Mail*, *Frank Letters*, and *Crank Calls* (Hanuman Books, 1988). After leaving Provincetown in 1980, she moved to New York and began writing about art for *BOMB* and *Details*. Gary Indiana described her this way: “She was like a woman in flames—like I’d never seen before. Not just a beauty, but the freedom that she had about herself, like a comet going across the sky once in a century.”

THE LONGLOOK OVERLOOK A REVIEW OF THE ARTS



Denise Doherty Pappas, author of *John Simmons: The Measure of a Man* (No Small Matters Press, 2014), is a graduate of Simmons College, one of the first all-female colleges in the nation, founded in 1899 by an enlightened entrepreneur, John Simmons, who became wealthy by manufacturing ready-to-wear clothing for the masses of people in this period who moved from farms to cities. This definitive biography, gracefully written, is studded with abundant details of nineteenth-century society, particularly in Boston, where Simmons's business prospered. He became keenly aware of the role of education for the advancement of women, leaving his fortune to found the college that bears his name. Pappas writes, "In an effort to exclude women from academia, men often adamantly opposed the admission of women to their colleges. As a result, Radcliffe, Pembroke, Barnard, and Jackson College were established." Pappas gives a vivid picture of the period, when clothes declared one's social rank.

Julia Salinger, an artist who writes, has published her first book of poetry, *When I Awoke* (A Scenic Route Production, 2015), the poems intertwining with her calligraphic drawings, as if the images are spun from the words. This is, in fact, characteristic of her paintings and drawings, which often embed language and letter forms. Her impulse takes her lines on questing strolls, creating entrances and exits that give surprising meaning to the journey. She wears gypsy clothes and speaks rapidly with a thick Bronx accent, having studied to become an art historian at Columbia under the tutelage of Irving Sandler, who wrote *The Triumph of American Painting*. For seventeen years, she followed her intuitive delight, working for musicians such as Laurie Anderson, before buying property in Wellfleet—with a large barn that is now her studio,



which she calls the Mermaid's Grange, a rustic space open to the public. She also exhibits in Wellfleet at the FARM Project Space + Gallery. One poem begins, "he said I was the sexiest / mermaid in Wellfleet / I reminded him / that I was probably the only one."

THEATER

This year marks the centennial of the founding of the **Provincetown Players**, the moniker of a loosely knit group of Greenwich Village comrades who launched their experimental theater in the East End of town, a leap of faith that was to establish Provincetown as a center of Modernism in the arts, and launch the careers of playwrights Eugene O'Neill and Susan Glaspell.

In collaboration with the Provincetown Theater, the Eugene O'Neill Society, and the Susan Glaspell Society, this year's celebration—produced with artistic support from Wellfleet Harbor Actors Theater, Payomet Performing Arts Center, and CTEK Arts—features productions of *Suppressed Desires* by George Cram Cook and Glaspell, *Constancy* by Neith Boyce, *Trifles* by Glaspell, and *The Sniper* by O'Neill. The Players' legacy and relation to Provincetown will be honored this summer during a Humanities Panel with O'Neill and Glaspell scholars Robert M. Dowling, Linda Ben-Zvi, and Jeffery Kennedy, moderated by Susan Rand Brown, with a book talk by Dowling, author of *Eugene O'Neill: A Life in Four Acts*, reviewed in this issue.

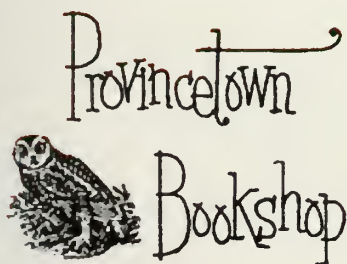
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Paul Bowen

ADRIFT IN TIME AND PLACE

BY ANDRÉ VAN DER WENDE

PAUL BOWEN's fascination with the past is our reward. His insatiable curiosity with history, and his place within it, is in many ways what drives his work. Watching him in the overstuffed confines of his Vermont garage, enthusiastically combing through boxes of nineteenth-century clay pipes, their constituent stems and bowls, clay marbles, and fractured porcelain from old dolls, is to feel him reach to the past so that he may understand the present. "For some reason I've always been attracted to waste material, something that's had a previous use or another life of some sort, broken things," Bowen says, turning between his thumb and forefinger the calcified inner-ear bone of a pilot whale, another one of his "curiosities."

To call him a sculptor of "found" materials is lazy and far too narrow a designation, if only because Bowen has made equally inspired drawings, paintings, prints, and textiles. "I'm no found object purist," he declares, but his ability to connect his materials to history through arresting form without scarifying their original character is undisputed. Bowen's repurposing of indigenous materials is a form of transfiguration, a recontextualizing of matter into an homage for people and place through a legacy of discarded and forgotten objects that are as intrinsic to a region as the landscape that hides them and the people who reveal them. This connection to the trace history of a regional culture, the people who worked, loved, and lost their way before him, doesn't reside as some form of sticky romanticism floundering against the rocks of weary nostalgia. Hardly. Bowen gives his work a firmly contemporary footing that's grounded not so much in time as it is in "place." Location, location, location. It provides him with his raw materials, reclaimed and recycled from the sea, the river, or the town itself, but it also gives him a conceptual frame on which to hang his work.

Bowen's intention, it seems, is not to add to what already exists but rather to use what's right in front of him, coveting materials that come fully loaded with the patina of the past so that he may give them another chance in the present. Scavenged wood from old fish boxes, rescued cable drums, and storm-damaged objects tossed up on the tide—all of his materials carry their own stories. Bowen's canny resourcefulness is unique, a "what you see is what you get" pragmatism that redirects our attention to the everyday, the discarded, the infirm detritus that he notices and carefully reassembles into tributes that hold integrity and ingenuity in high esteem. What he finds may be a bundle of truncated oars, a blue tarp shrouding a small inverted stool, or slats of raw wood from old fish boxes brined with history, but Bowen's ability to turn the mundane into magic is what defines him.

His tone of expressive vernacular is singular, a poetic coda for abandoned materials enshrined in a codependency of structural viability and meaning. Salvaging old boards from a storm-damaged home, he can take another's misfortune and turn it into something affective and meaningful enough that the person can forget the original calamity. Bowen's refinement toward the one-of-a-kind is what transposes



Paul Bowen and his Vermont studio barn PHOTOS BY ANDRE VAN DER WENDE



his materials from the realm of the ordinary to the extraordinary, honing a deeply personal truth by tapping into the uniqueness of his medium and the people it touches along the way—it exists within a continuum, in and out of time itself.

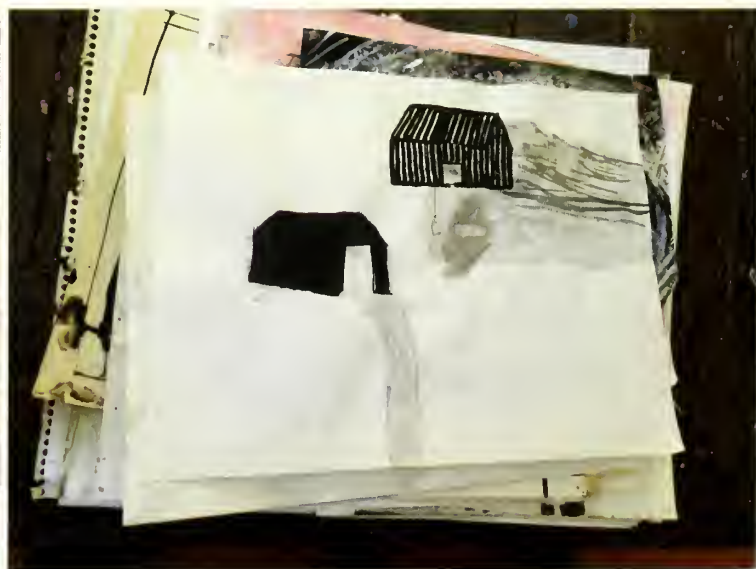
The story of how a sixty-four-year-old Welshman came to end up in southern Vermont, after spending nearly thirty years living in Provincetown, has a rough-hewn charm that seems to fit the same way Bowen's sculptures just seem to align themselves within their own innate logic. This fall will mark ten years since Bowen and his wife, the writer Pamela Mandell, moved to Williamsville, twenty minutes north of Brattleboro. "We sort of stumbled into Vermont," Bowen explains. "I was artist-in-residence at Dartmouth College [Hanover, New Hampshire], and I had just learned to drive around that time, so on weekends I started exploring and I found this little area and sort of fell for it. I had lived in Provincetown for twenty-nine years, and I think the seasonal thing had become just a bit too much. The prospect of living in a really vibrant year-round community was very appealing."

Certainly, the economic viability of Provincetown versus Vermont also played a part, but Bowen appears settled now, not even dissuaded by the threat of floods and bears in the woods. "There's a very big art community here, but not like it is on the Cape. It's more diverse, I would say. This neck of the woods has a tremendous connection to the Cape though. I can't tell you how many people we know who live here who lived on the Cape, or even go back and forth to the Cape. We have half a dozen friends within just a few miles of here who have lived in Provincetown at one time or another. We actually get together and have potlucks sometimes. It's amazing!" he says, breaking into laughter.

Bowen's house is set on the upper bank of the Rock River, a modest tributary spanned by an impressively large covered bridge a stone's throw

from Bowen's front door. Our visit has been delayed three times due to winter storms and scheduling conflicts, and when we finally convene it's early April. There are snow flurries in the air but less than a foot of accumulation on the ground, as winter makes its slow retreat. It's the gloomy beginning of mud season, but Bowen offers comfort with a broad smile and bowls of homemade chicken soup, his cooking prowess as rustic and true as his art. He's a natural, animated conversationalist, an attentive listener who loves to steer the spotlight away from himself, if only to stop and take genuine interest in those around him. His Welsh accent has softened over time, and he talks as much with his hands as he does with his quick, bright eyes, which are shielded beneath his prominent dark brows. He is self-deprecating, will always defer to the abilities of others before announcing his own, and throughout our stay begins more than one story with the words, "I've done some dumb-ass things in my time!" followed by a mischievous, slightly wheezy "Hee, hee, hee!" and peals of laughter.

Paul Bowen applies his personal truth, his authenticity and humility, to his work, a physical manifestation that's a direct extension of his approach to life, and not wanting his art to be separate from it in any way. Art helps codify the different strands that give Bowen a sense of identity, a true self among the fray that extends beyond oceans and borders. Consider the raised eyebrows when Bowen upped stakes and traded the glazed heat and expanse of Provincetown for the steep hills and deep valleys of rural Vermont. Provincetown is as ingrained in him as his Welsh roots. And so now is Williamsville, Vermont, in the Green Mountains, a world away under heavy woods and pitched slopes that shadow the narrow road running through town, leading to Bowen's house. Moving from an exterior, expansive landscape to a more interior one seems incongruous at first, especially considering that Bowen grew up facing the Irish Sea off the north coast of Wales before committing three decades to Provincetown. The ocean has





been key to Bowen's psyche; but, wherever he resides, he appears to be the great adapter, immersing himself in his environment and engaging in its past, its present, and, ultimately, its future.

In Vermont, Bowen appears to be just fine, seamlessly integrated, with ten years being enough time to qualify this as a third chapter in Bowen's arc as an artist and a fellow traveler. He didn't come here to be a farmer since he's always been one—he's still collecting his wood from the water, only now it's wood from the river instead of the ocean; instead of making squid ink, it's walnut ink, five-gallon buckets of the stuff fermenting beneath the eaves of his house, enough to last several lifetimes. Weighing how much his "new" location has affected his work, Bowen says it is difficult to know: "Change is just that—we change wherever we are, and how much of it is really influenced by what is around? Certainly, the images of barns and covered bridges show up quite a lot in my work, but it's very much my own sort of vocabulary, the materials and processes I've used before. To say that I sort of carry the Cape with me sounds like such a cliché, or pretentious, but in some way I feel quite deeply embedded with it, just like, in a similar way, I might be with my background in Wales. It's all assimilated."

Colwyn Bay, on the northern coast of Wales, is a Victorian resort town famous for its beaches and romanticized in a period railway poster as "The Gateway to the Welsh Rockies." Timothy Dalton and Monty Python's Terry Jones were born here, and, in 1951, so was Paul Bowen. He was also raised here: "My brother and I grew up in our grandparents' row house, which they had bought in the '20s when the town was being developed because of the railway." His grandfather was an ironmonger, worked in a hardware store, and engraved coffin plates in his spare time. "That really sort of intrigued me. I think about that quite a bit, all that labor buried underground," Bowen says, adding that it stirred his interest in manual arts. "He had that beautiful sort of Victorian curly Gothic script, dipped pen calligraphy."

His grandparents' first language was Welsh, at a time when speaking this language was prohibited by the laws of English imperialism. In their home, English was similarly barred, making for what Bowen describes as "an interesting kind of dichotomy." His father and uncle were bilingual but Bowen never learned to speak Welsh fluently, something he regrets: "Not having the language of your home cuts you off from so much of the culture." He's been trying to bridge the gap ever since, excavating and forging an identity nearly forty years after his arrival in the New World.

One can draw a line back from the kind of abiding self-sufficiency that Bowen honors in his life and work to growing up in Wales during the 1950s and '60s. As a young child, he had a ration card for orange juice as the country continued to adjust to postwar life. His family had no telephone, no refrigeration, and coal heat. It was a time of conventional attitudes and norms, of "waste not, want not," appreciating necessity, and eschewing extravagance. In many ways, it's how he continues to live, and points to the fact that, among other things, making sixty gallons of walnut ink is something Bowen does simply because he can.

Restrictions aside, Bowen's childhood was also rich in fantasy and imagination, a time of insights that opened up multiple doors of inquiry. "I was an adventuring kind of kid," he recalls. "That's what you did, you disappeared into the woods for the day with a bunch of friends, you made fires, and you played cowboys and Indians or Romans and Britons. I was also a fanatical fisherman. I started fishing really seriously at around nine or ten years old. That became a huge part of my life, and in a way that sort of started things off toward beachcombing."

His father defused bombs during World War II, and was an architect and an amateur historian. He took the young Bowen and his brother on excursions to explore old chapels, burial sites, and roads ancient enough to have carried the feet of the Roman Empire. Two miles from their home,





Bowen installing a drawing show at the Colwyn Gallery, 1975, Colwyn Bay, Wales PHOTO BY MARTIN TAYLOR



Paul Bowen in his studio at the Fine Arts Work Center, 1978



on the beach near Bowen's favorite fishing spot, is a tiny stone chapel from the sixth century dedicated to Saint Trillo. "It is probably about eleven feet long and about seven or eight feet wide, seven feet high, right by the water," he remembers. "Spring tides come right up to it. There is an altar inside, and under the altar there is a well and it always has fresh water in it that supposedly has healing properties." History, mystery, ritual, and myth continue to be prevailing themes for Bowen.

The family eventually purchased land on the edge of the town, overlooking the bay on one side, and, immediately behind the house, a deep bucolic valley. "From the front doorstep you could see the Isle of Man, Liverpool, and Ireland on a clear day. And over the garden, it was sheep and rolling hills and mountains as far as your eye could see. I think that some kind of root of becoming an artist started there for me," he explains, and goes on to talk about his sense of play, which was combined with building things, such as molding clay into spheres interlaced with twine. "We made dams, we made caves out of branches. It sounds corny, but I think the love of making stuff came from that. I almost feel like a product of that background, which is beyond a consciously chosen path."

Bowen made his first steps toward "the love of making stuff" a little more conscious by enrolling in a pre-diploma course at the Chester School of Art in Chester, England. A year later, in 1969, he began the first of three years at the Newport College of Art in Newport, South Wales, an industrial town on a tidal river. "There was a much more adventurous faculty in terms of painters and sculptors," he recalls. "Almost immediately, my work was quite visceral." He started out as a painter, but not the conventional kind: "I started buying tar by the gallon from the local hardware store, and gesso—just the cheapest flat white paint you could get. And I would work with them on

more or less disposable surfaces. I'd use bedsheets, roll-up window blinds that were dark green or black. I was painting on these things, like a plastic drop cloth, with tar. The process that I would use began with coating all over the surface, and then folding it up and letting the paint dry. When it was dry, I'd rip it open and it would make whatever pattern it made. With the plastic, that was especially dramatic. It would look a little bit like a Clyfford Still, but that was not deliberate—that just happened in the pattern that opened up."

For a formative Bowen, the early 1970s was a vibrant time in the art world. "Process was big, kinetics, Minimalism, Arte Povera, the German school, Polish artists. There was an incredible ferment of artists," says Bowen, who decided to tap into the discussion and pursue graduate studies with Joseph Beuys at the Kunstakademie in Düsseldorf. He was particularly taken with the economy of Beuys's drawings and his use of fat and felt. The very idea that materials could carry symbolic gravitas and mythic heft was particularly striking, but, after his acceptance, Bowen was left high and dry in the wake of Beuys's dismissal for his open-door admissions policy, which basically admitted anyone who applied.

It's indicative perhaps of the cultural bubble in which Bowen lived that he changed plans and enrolled in the MFA program at the LeRoy E. Hoffberger School of Painting at the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore. "I was a little naive. I looked on a map and saw it was by the ocean," he says, admitting that he envisioned a seaside resort of some kind. "It was a very tough place back then, so I got to go on a warp-speed education about America! There was a realization that there was a possibility of having a life as an artist in this country, but I didn't think I was going to stay here. I really had no thought of that." Two years and a master's degree later, Bowen left America to take up a position teaching sculpture at the Sheffield



(left to right) The barn housing Bowen's studio; the covered bridge just outside his home; at a thrift shop in Hudson, New York; (opposite page) Pamela Mandell with Bowen on a trail in Vermont; Bowen with his granddaughter Maddie, Christmas 2013

ASAP PHOTO BY ANDREW JAH DER WENDE





Paul Bowen at FAWC, 1987



Bowen with his friend and assistant, Irén Handschuh, while working on *Windrush II* (pictured next page) at the site of the current Provincetown Theater, 2002

Polytechnic in England, while continuing to explore and extrapolate on the tactility of materials and painting by working in several directions at once. His paintings were becoming more sculptural, with sculpture pressing to the fore, a free-ranging inquiry exploring themes of ritual, pilgrimage, and his Welsh heritage concurrent with early process-orientated work and his first simple wooden constructions, such as *Wheeled Shrine* (1974). The '70s were a pivotal time for Bowen: in 1974, he finished graduate school; in 1977, he came back to the United States to take up his residency at the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown. "The work," he says, "went in almost—what on the surface appeared to be—diametrically opposite directions simultaneously. There was a lot of uncertainty about things." In order to work out these uncertainties, Bowen felt he needed to pull away from teaching so he could focus on his work. "I started to look for opportunities to just do the work, and it was enough to get into the Work Center and I essentially stayed. Provincetown was my jumping-off point." It's also the point at which he started to hit his stride and become the Paul Bowen we know today.

The large double-decker barn that houses Bowen's current studio is a short drive from his home, an imposing dark-brown building, in various degrees of disrepair, with a buckled corrugated iron roof. Bowen's space occupies the upper back floor. The heat has been down all winter, so when we climb the stairs to the top floor, our breath leads the way. Bowen is stunned when he opens the studio door and steps into a blanket of warm

air. "I can't believe the heat! I haven't used the heat for at least nine months, almost a year!" he says in disbelief, grinning from ear to ear. What it really means is that he can finally get back to work after a fallow winter doing works on paper. Bowen doesn't work under artificial light, and, while at first that sounds strange, one foot into his space and it is easy to see why. With studio work a strictly daytime activity, he doesn't need artificial lighting—the space is beautifully illuminated by tall windows on three sides and large skylights set high in a vaulted ceiling that disperses a consistent soft light even on an overcast day in early spring. For looking at sculpture, it's the perfect light.

As one might expect, it's a visual cacophony of objects and materials everywhere: different types of work on the floor and on all the walls; drawings and various stencils tacked to the wall; the contoured template used in *Chart* (2014), from last year's show at the Albert Merola Gallery; and an assortment of sculptures old and new, in progress and complete. There's a set of wooden embroidery hoops attached to the wall, with a bright red tarp slung casually off to one side, like a vain bullfighter's retort, with more embroidery hoops hanging off the sides of a chair awaiting application of some kind. There are boxes and boxes of tools, clamps, drill bits, and wood, lots of wood, stacked or leaning against the wall and spilling out of even more boxes. Then you start to notice the predominance of the circular form, cut out, painted as flat black orbs across raw fields of textured wood or sailcloth, more hoops,





Wheel Shrine, 1974, wood, 9 by 7 by 4 inches

and the rotund form of a small blackened barrel keg. Give the eyes time to settle and you also notice that Bowen adheres to a methodology of loosely cataloging everything as it's collected, the wood separated according to size, tone, and texture, boxes of blue wood, boxes of white, and so on.

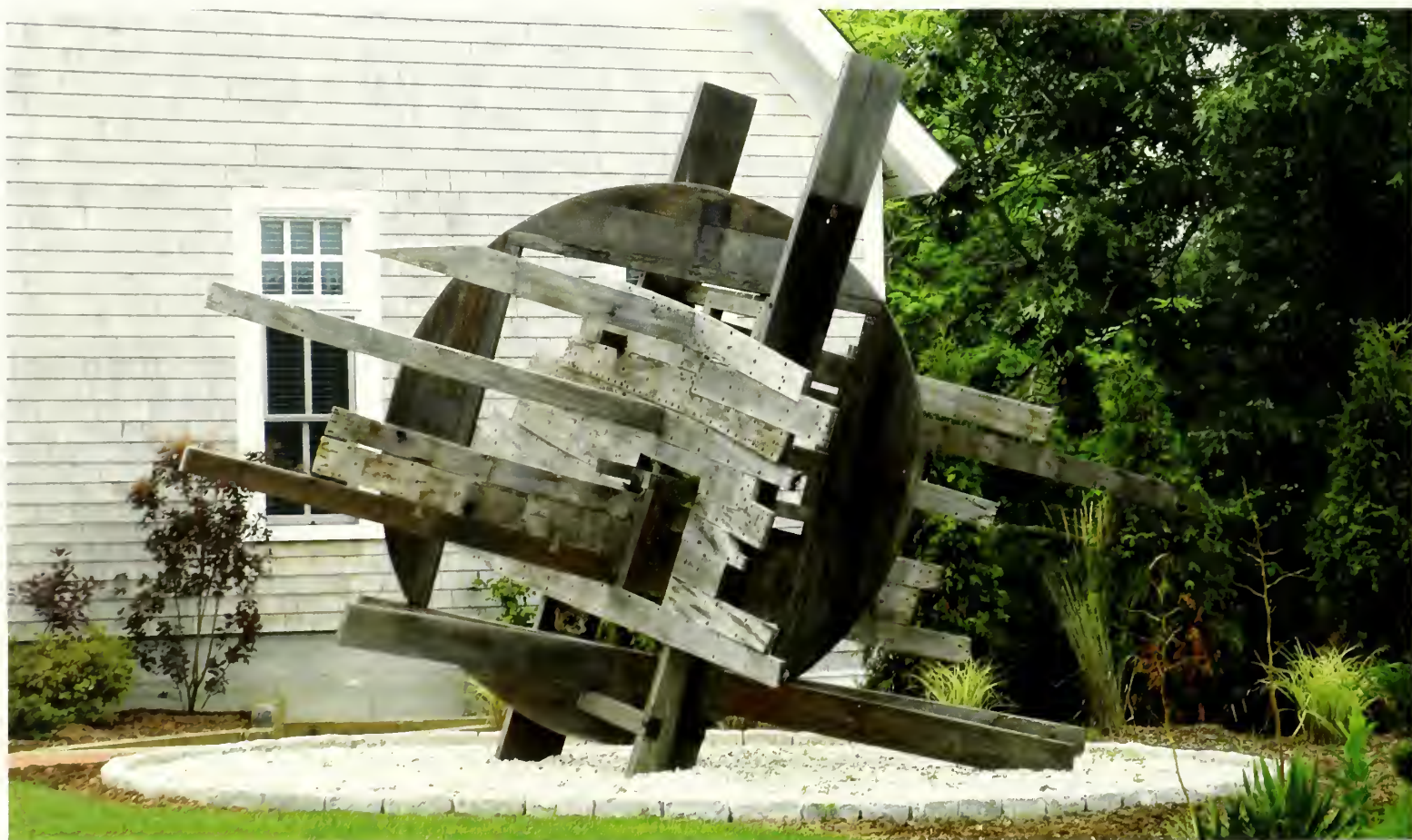
After showing me his garage and the space next to his studio, Bowen preempts my question: "Oh, you know what? I hate to tell you but I've got a lifetime's supply of materials, both Vermontry stuff and Cape stuff." His collecting has slowed down, but only because these days he's far more discerning about what he drags back to the studio. As one attuned to the rhythm of the land, the rhythm of a town, Bowen knows when and where to look, that in Provincetown he will find "the best stuff on the super low tides,"

or that in Vermont he will collect masses of driftwood from the riverbanks after the snow and ice melt and release large amounts of material caught in ice dams. "It's wash-down," he explains. "I go hunting for that stuff too. Worse comes to worst, I can just keep warm with it!"

A large part of Bowen's process—if you want to call it that; *ritual* may sound a little overblown but it's not an inappropriate term—begins with sourcing his materials, living with them, considering them, and building a relationship with them. There's as much, if not more, of simply looking, contextualizing, and harvesting potentiality to a point of realization and, finally, manifestation. For these works to exist, they need to declare themselves fully, which is why everything feels resolutely resolved: compositionally, aesthetically, emotionally, spiritually. "Things stick around for a long time," Bowen says. "It's like a dance." For him, this is that space "in between" where materials dictate form and he is just along for the ride, knowing how much to apply himself while keening in to the sensitivity of the material.

Bowen is a master builder, not in the conventional sense, but in the Paul Bowen sense. Each butterfly joint, each cut and fold, each staple or stitch, each flat expanse of black and white, has his signature attached the same way good painters mark their work. Bowen was never formally trained in woodwork or construction of any kind, and he still winces when he recalls some of the shoddy carpentry jobs he performed in the '80s: "So bad, just so so terrible!" In art school he was intimidated by the male workshop fraternity and terrified of the two-foot table saws' blades, and a lot of the hand-me-down power tools he acquired over the years were ear-shattering and unreliable. But these "handicaps," along with the fact that he's largely self-taught, have done nothing but embolden his work, keeping it authentically Paul Bowen and grounded to affect more than effect, although there's a little of that also. When it's required, he will seek help with large-scale work, a tricky clamping or gluing job, but if that butterfly joint is less than perfect, it's because Bowen cut it—which means that it's absolutely perfect. You feel it in the work, the search, how he is trying to figure it out, the engineering and aesthetic refinement weighed out next to the meter of conceptual success.

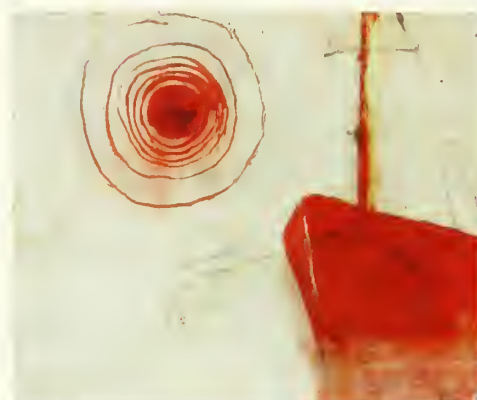
With a career stretching back to the 1970s, Bowen's ability to coax arresting form from "invisible" materials is well established, his attuned



Windrush II, 2004, mahogany and redwood, 132 by 122 by 120 inches COLLECTION OF CAPE COD MUSEUM OF ART, DENNIS, PURCHASED WITH FUNDS DONATED BY JAMES AND STEPHANIA MCLENNEN



(clockwise from top left) *Three Red Boats*, 2015, ink and watercolor on paper, 5½ by 8½ inches; *Irish Thing*, 2015, ink and watercolor on paper, 5½ by 8½ inches; *Spiraling Wharf*, 2000, tar and watercolor on paper, 9 by 6 inches; *Sun & Boat*, 2015, oil paint and watercolor on paper, 6¼ by 6¼ inches; *Skiff*, 2014, mixed media on paper, 8½ by 11 inches; *Trio*, 2015, ink on paper, 8½ by 8½ inches. ALL COURTESY OF ALBERT MEROLA GALLERY



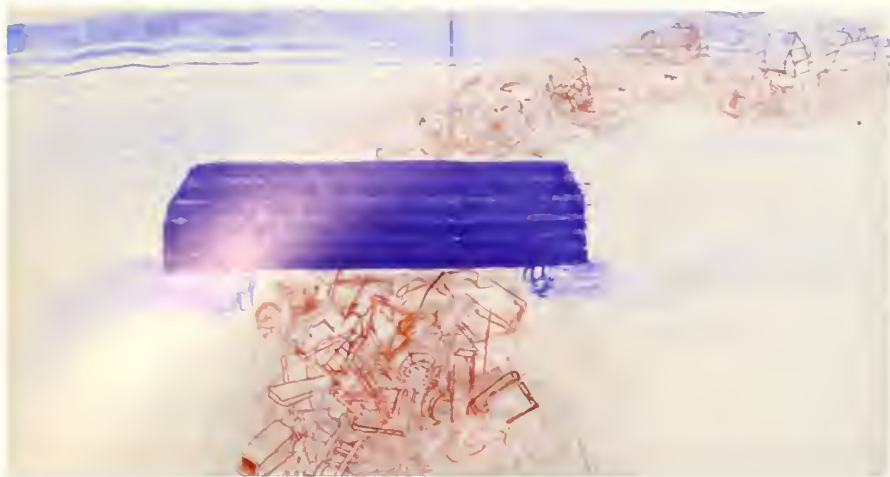
receptivity the result of a lifetime's work that is prodigious but never rushed. It can be slow to gestate, with time spent listening to and honoring the materials that dictate the terms, even if sometimes the terms don't work out and the piece eventually has to be abandoned. "It tells me the truth rather than me imposing the truth," he says. Certainly, Bowen's hand guides the finished form, but he is also adept at achieving that middle ground where he can allow the materials to shine next to his own hand. "The big dilemma is this: do you just let things unfold the way they go—a "whatever happens happens" sort of approach—and see if these things come together through a natural process? Or, do you try to mix milk and vinegar and then have it be palatable—or maybe not? Maybe it coagulates and that's what it is."

Laid out in three rows on the studio floor are a series of small beginnings, pieces of wood applied with black stripes, circles, or squares, vaguely Constructivist, already enticing. Some of the wood comes from shipping pallets, a contemporary material Bowen would normally dismiss but speaks to his more recent "what the hell, why not?" approach. "I think I went through quite a long period of not doing a lot of self-questioning," he says. "When I was young, I did it all the time obsessively—wrote a lot, argued a lot with friends, whatever. And then I seem to have gone through a period of years where I hit a stride and got used to tools and process, materials, and all that." He pauses, takes a breath. "Now, I get to sit with my life and look ahead, thinking." Part of what precipitates this anxiety at the crossroads is that Bowen is turning sixty-four this summer, the same age his father was when he passed away. It's given him pause. "I've been looking through lots and lots of old work," he says, "and thousands of drawings, and I've been doing some new drawing and thinking about how to proceed. I'm starting off with something I know and then maybe moving into something a little different. I am reconsidering a lot, reevaluating where my work has gone over the years. You get to a certain point in your life and you think, 'How much longer am I going to be working, and what am I going to be doing?' Physical limitations change."

Bowen doesn't rule out doing large, free-standing sculpture again, but it takes a lot logistically, mentally, and physically, not to mention a serious

commitment of time. *Windrush II* (2002), a classic large free-standing sculpture in the collection of the Cape Cod Museum of Art in Dennis, takes Bowen's circle form and skewers it with long slats of redwood that alternate at a dynamic pitch. It sits outside of the building, off to the right of the museum entrance, rather awkwardly backed into a corner on an equally awkward bed of crushed white seashells into which it's slowly settling. There are a few tufts of pale green lichen attached in places, and what looks like a missing board or two, but even with all these distractions, its dynamic command of space is undiminished. Bowen maintains an informal role as congenial caretaker for a lot of his work, continuing to be responsible for maintenance and repairs that include natural wear and tear and any unfortunate accidental deconstruction. It is not his responsibility, but it speaks to Bowen's connection to the work: when your children leave home they are still your children. Knowing that *Windrush II* involved multiple collaborative hands and took a year to complete, I can understand Bowen's liberation in reducing the scale, complexity, and need for outside help in the new work.

With his studio effectively shut down for this winter, and no heavy lifting required for his sculptures, Bowen turned to drawing as his main means of inquiry. He will always follow his instinct toward a new creative perspective over what he already knows, and his works on paper are one of the best places for him to steer a course for the path less traveled. Even in the two-dimensional world, where he cultivates a sometimes combative, often unconventional approach, tactility and a certain objectness are important. His line work can be scratchy and choppy, or deep and sinewy, embedded into the paper, that is, it's interesting to note, not unlike an engraver's line. He's one of the best painters of black I know, from impenetrable darkness to a delicate hush, finding inert density or vaporous billowing washes that swirl beneath striations of parallel lines. Bowen treats his works on paper without any fine-art propriety, preferring cheap thin stock with smooth surfaces, mostly small pages that he will happily run under soap and water and then dry on top of a radiator before assaulting them with further layers of walnut ink, squid ink, asphaltum, pen and ink, or coffee grounds, perhaps



Flood, 2008, watercolor on paper, 10 by 19 inches COURTESY OF ALBERT MEROLA GALLERY



Bridge Skow, 2008, ink on paper, 10 by 19 inches PRIVATE COLLECTION

cutting a page up, adding collage or a stencil, and then running it through a xerox before reassembling it into another form.

It sounds a lot like sculpture, and what Bowen can't play out three-dimensionally, he can play out here, such as by imagining impossible engineering feats, or visualizing calamity. Witness *Bridge Skow* (2008) and *Flood* (2008), the first a drawing of a covered bridge set adrift upon turbulent waters, and the second with the bridge front and center as a bold blue silhouette, grounded and strong as a disaster of biblically apocalyptic proportions surges beneath in a steady red stream. Both refer to actual events that took place when flooding from Hurricane Irene carried an alarming amount of Williamstown down the river's banks, with buildings and roads washed away, and northward in Rochester, a local cemetery's residents literally rose up out of their graves.

It would be remiss to call his works on paper a mere adjunct to his peak performances; they constitute a major collective body that allows his innate painterly quality to shine. He has a fine painter's sensibility that finds its most obvious form on paper, with spirited dense layering, fluid washes, and attention to surface complexity that invite detailed exploration. Thread the thousands of drawings together and they form a quasi-narrative through time and place, a mythic quest for connection that attests not only to Bowen's own journey, but also to a journey for all humble travelers, all pilgrims everywhere who cross oceans and span rivers in search of new opportunities and experiences. In Bowen's world, water is the principal barrier that one must cross over, in boats, over wharfs, and on covered bridges that allow travelers to pass over swift currents with impunity. Water is the great provider as well as the harbinger of danger, a primary element that's feted as much as it is feared.

Although he no longer lives on the Cape, Bowen still maintains deep ties to the community. His daughter lives on the Upper Cape, and he returns to Provincetown each summer for teaching commitments at the Fine Arts Work Center and the Truro Center for the Arts at Castle Hill. Today, the barns and bridges of Vermont are as integrated and natural to Bowen's vocabulary as the piers of Provincetown, but he still continues to draw upon the Cape for materials

and imagery. Wales, Provincetown, or Vermont, location becomes interchangeable, a construct Bowen creates for himself. "The covered bridge, the barns, and the rivers have all become an image in my work," he explains. "The barns and covered bridges are like wharves, and a wharf is a hell of a lot like a barn."

When Bowen arrived in Provincetown in 1977 for the first of his two years at the Fine Arts Work Center, "it was weird and funky," he recalls, not to mention affordable. His knowledge of Provincetown history, its colorful parade of misfits and misdeeds is vast, but in typically self-deprecating manner, Bowen will always defer to others whose historical breadth, he claims, eclipses his own. Nevertheless, our conversation is peppered with a staggering litany of personalities and places, the minutiae of the moments that made up his years in Provincetown, including his time with the prestigious Long Point Gallery, which anointed Bowen with a level of prestige that still makes him feel uncomfortable. People make the place, and Bowen's work reflects that—the clammers and fishermen, the builders and manual workers, are honored by Bowen's vernacular language of simplified, stencil-like forms depicting fishing trawlers or clay pipes, signifiers of the workers with whom Bowen aligns himself.

"I think that the environment of Provincetown, the light of the Cape, all of that had an impact on me," he explains. "Human objects in the landscape sort of take on the landscape and, of course, the landscape is influenced by their presence." In his first year, he created tall ceremonial objects, such as *Processional Sculpture* (1977), ritualistic, obliquely utilitarian objects that were drawn from his interest in European pilgrimages and, specifically, Bardsey Island, off the northwest corner of Wales, a revered site for pilgrims and rumored to be the burial ground of some twenty thousand saints. "At that time," he recalls,



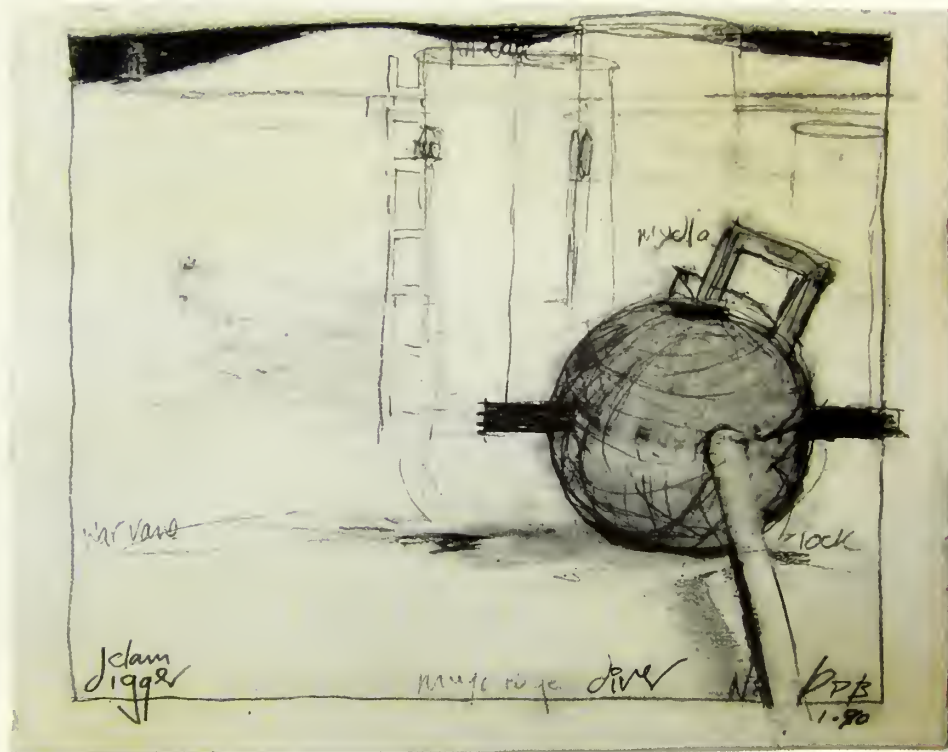
Processional Sculpture, 1977, mixed media, 46 by 39 by 4 inches COLLECTION OF BERTA WALKER

Clam Digger

By James Balla

ONE DAY IN THE VERY EARLY 1990s, I paid a visit to Paul Bowen in his studio. Located in a barn on Pleasant Street in Provincetown, it was filled, as Paul's current studio is now, with an amazing array of things—tools of every kind, metal, clay pipe pieces, interesting shells, inscrutable objects, and just about anything else that caught his artist's eye. There were copious amounts of sawdust and wood chips, because there was wood of all varieties and dimensions—planks, beams, maybe broken chairs, most of which Paul had scavenged from the shores of Provincetown. Paul had been working on some enormous pieces that could fill a regular-sized room, as well as an assortment of smaller sculptures. By the end of that visit, we had agreed to trade a piece of work. What I chose was a pencil drawing, *Clam Digger*.

On a piece of paper no more than six by seven inches, within a rough framing line, Paul had combined observation, landscape, ideas, and language in a deliberate yet casual way. There is enough of a suggestion here to allow the viewer to be able to interpret and perceive these elements: A line that suggests a horizon or the water's edge of a dune. A ladder and cylindrical shapes that seemingly refer to a pier and posts. The main element of the drawing is something that appears to be an idea for a sculpture—a large round form, seemingly pierced by a beam and propped up by a pole of some kind. And is that an old chair rising from the top? The pencil line is crisp, smudged, erased, emphatic, enigmatic. Throughout the drawing are words: *clam digger*, *war vane*, *diver*, *lock*, etc. After living in Provincetown for thirty years, I know the sight and feel of going out on the ever-changing flats and clamming in the cold of winter. The experience is the beauty and the work and the reward all in one. Paul has depicted that scene many times. Yet this drawing has only a ghost of a clammer, if that. It is as though we started out with



Clam Digger, 1990, pencil on paper, 6 by 7 inches

him on the flats observing the clam diggers, and found ourselves swept up in a fascinating flight into the artist's process and creation.

Before moving to Provincetown in 1985, I worked in steel, making welded sculptures that sometimes incorporated wooden beams and painted elements. Many of these were large-scale works that required both drawing and practical planning along with an intuitive working method. Inevitably, I was drawn to the honest workmanlike quality of Paul's process, which certainly is exemplified by his works on paper. I have a love of drawing, and an appreciation of the need to draw. I believe it essential to any visual artist, regardless of the actual form the art may take. Paul's drawing seemed to reverberate through time and gave me echoes of many of the drawings by Leonardo da Vinci—specifically drawings of water-lifting devices, or other machines, which combined a mysterious handwriting with observational details infused with inspiration and unlimited imagination. The words were the idea put down in writing that the artist needed at the time, but in the end they became as much a part of the visual whole as the images depicted.

These working drawings of Leonardo's were practical endeavors, seeking answers to questions, beauty in nature, details of the cosmos. It is this deep connection to nature and the world he lived in, combined with his skilled and honed gift, that makes them works of art. And so it is with Paul Bowen. An ability to render the humble magnificent is a rare ability indeed. A clam digger. A horizon. A sculpture. A word. A work of art.

JAMES BALLA is an artist and co-owner of Albert Merola Gallery in Provincetown. A retrospective of his work, *Into the blue again*, was held in 2013 at the Provincetown Art Association and Museum.

"I was doing work about Bardsey Island, but it came from my head rather than the experience of being there. I made quite a number of processional-looking pieces, boats and things like that. But then in the summer of '78 I had to go back to Wales for a visa renewal, so I visited Bardsey Island." After spending two weeks there, Bowen reached a new awareness of the barren reality of a few buildings and even fewer people, distant from what he had visualized, but it did connect him to the joy of beachcombing along the cliff edges and beaches. If there's one thing Bowen brought back, it was the sense that it was possible to infuse myth into his work through the history of what was already there.

Bowen's work started to take on focus, and in 1980 he made *Navigator*, a pivotal work that establishes the tondo and shelf form while expanding his range of verbs: binding, stacking, cradling, stuffing, layering, covering, wrapping—all nurturing, repetitive, ritualistic types of actions. He still uses the shelf design today, the concept of presenting something for consideration, of enshrining and circumscribing an object or objects in a space that is intimate and sacred. In the case of *Navigator*, Bowen takes debris from the bay, an oarlock, and small disks from discharged fireworks and wraps them in old bedsheets dipped in bayberry wax, thereby completing a process that began as excavation and ends at embalming.

In the 1980s, Bowen hit his mark. There's fire in the work, a vigor and confidence that extends the scale toward the monumental in key works, such as the dynamic arcing of *Ramp* (1987–88), and the winged, sail-like forms of *Rafter* (1987–88). A personal favorite of mine is the one that started it off—one of the large-scale wall pieces, *Hiraethum* (1986), Bowen's own play on the Welsh word *Hiraeth*, which translated means "homesickness." This most celestial of works is a harmonious meeting of the square and the circle, its pattern of orange honey-toned butterfly joints scattered across an azure expanse of blue like a field of farfalla or stars in the night sky. By creating an aperture and bringing one edge of the circle forward, he could reveal an armature and bring a lightness to an otherwise hefty structure. "Things didn't have to be symmetrical," he explains. "Things didn't have to be weighty, they didn't have to be heavy. There could be a buoyancy that was a valid way of making it work." In this way, he was playing against its physical reality and giving it the appearance of hovering off the wall.

He tends to downplay his use of color, and *Hiraethum* is unusual in its striking use of blue, the boards coming from the remnants of a friend's old garden shed. "I was literally transfixed by this incredible blue," he says. "Just the color alone was a really luscious moving surface. It's like the blue of Giotto's frescos before they restored it, when it had this deeply faded quality. This sculpture in a way really changed things for me. So much of the work up to this point had been dark, perhaps self-consciously solemn and perhaps a little ponderous—a bit like artifacts that had been exhumed. Finding these boards was just a phenomenal gift. It injected an air of optimism into what I was doing, showing that there is another way of being." That airiness opened up a receptivity to color, and what he could do with it formally and conceptually. "People are very drawn to this blue work. It's



almost like a spiritual recognition, that this blue resounds with something in our core. This sculpture is the one above all others that people respond to—I recognized this when I made it and I knew also that it was brand-new."

Never obvious or overt, for that's just not his style, Bowen is, I would argue, a colorist of the highest order and with the most subtle of senses. Playing a dry chalky white off a bottomless black makes the two colors act like stabilizing poles for a pendulum of tones and textures to swing between, a palette of wood in all its colorful variations, bleached and blond, grey and blackened, honey and amber, each patina a burnished composite of history and servitude. Though he will tell you otherwise, Bowen is in his own way a superb colorist, albeit operating within a very subtle, emotional range. "I don't really play that up. It's very intuitive—I don't think about it that much, but my process is very much part of it," he admits. "When I'm looking at wood to put together, it's a big consideration."

In *Kedge* (1990), Bowen tapped out his biggest wall piece at fourteen feet long, nine feet high, a staggering work that projects a foot and a half out from the wall and takes the idea of encounter and engagement to thrilling new levels. There's an undercurrent of imminent threat to some of the work, a feeling that the whole structure may collapse and bury you, or that that small barrel keg balanced at

(top to bottom) *Navigator*, 1980, 28½ by 8 inches. COLLECTION OF THE HOOD MUSEUM OF ART, DARTMOUTH COLLEGE, GIFT OF THE ESTATE OF ROBYN S. WATSON; *Rafter*, 1987–88, wood, 144 by 84 by 14 inches; *Ramp*, 1987–88, wood, 102 by 68 by 8 inches. PRIVATE COLLECTION



the end of a deep wedge attached to the wall may topple or roll. You also get that sense of encounter with a floor piece made out of old cable drums turned inside out and animated with the addition of an alluring curvaceous tail, which gives it an organic vitality while acting as an effective visual counterbalance.

"The thought of things not being quite so obvious really appeals to me," Bowen explains. "I like this idea that something is not quite what it looks like, it's a little cockeyed. I'm trying to be direct, and then sometimes I give that extra little bit of a push to get out of my comfort zone just enough to have an impetus to move on. I think in one's sensibility, or in one's work, there are always three parts to it. There's work that is so well known to us that it's redundant because it's ground we've gone over so much. Then there is work that is so new or out of left field that it is perplexing. And, finally, there is some kind of middle ground—it has its roots in your sensibility, but it pushes into the unknown. Being that little bit uncomfortable is a good place to be."

And then occasionally, says Bowen, "There are those things that you do sometimes and you just scratch your head and think 'Where the hell did that come from?'" Bowen had one of those head-scratching moments during his residency at Dartmouth College in 2005. "When I was there I did this work that I've never shown, and I still don't know what I think about it. I was using blue tarps with stools and chairs, wrapping them, stacking them, draping the tarps over them. Sometimes it was almost like I was making a Brancusi out of stools and stacking them up and making an endless column. Then I did big hanging pieces on the wall, using these blue tarps, and wrapping up furniture so you would see bits of them sticking out. . . . Talk about an outer edge of my sensibility!"

"I was making one or two a day in this gallery and then at night, when all the students had gone home, I would take it down to make another one. It was kind of a cool experience . . . a very exciting thing to do. And the students could see what I was making. They didn't even have to go into the gallery—there were glass doors, so they could see it. I'd be up on the ladder at midnight and there would be students going by with their homework."

Bowen admits that blending installation and theater was fun and had a spontaneous vitality, but he still thinks it was mostly razzle-dazzle: "It feels a bit fake, superficial—and that is why I've never shown them. They definitely had real clout, but making a whole body of work that fits into a matchbox is very appealing too. So even though something has huge dimensions, visual heft, I don't know if it necessarily has gravitas." Nevertheless, the Dartmouth work keeps coming up in conversation, and even though Bowen says he's "still not reconciled with that body of work," he becomes visibly animated each time he talks about it. It's the visual equivalent of Bowen's lost free-jazz album—he's an improvisationalist who's unsure if it wasn't all hot air, but still keeps coming back to the well.

Some of his more recent work, such as *Angler* (2012), which incorporates wooden embroidery hoops and oilskin, seems to demonstrate a willingness to use something newer and prefabricated. He is expanding his use of fabrics, such as sailcloth and oilskin, as an expressive material that can be stretched taut like a drum or draped, wrapped, and drawn at the discretion of gravity. "It did push my own sense of what I allow myself to do and I stuck with it," Bowen explains. "I was able to get my head



Edge, 1990, wood, 108 by 168 by 18 inches INSTALLATION AT JACK SHAINMAN GALLERY, NEW YORK CITY, COLLECTION OF JACK SHAINMAN
(top) *Hiraethum*, 1986, wood and chalk, 101 by 81 by 14 inches PRIVATE COLLECTION



around saying, 'That's okay.' You think as you get older that you'll get more sure. I'm pulled in several directions simultaneously that don't seem to have any coherence at all and it's puzzling—I'm still working on it in my head! I think the work at Dartmouth helped this new work. . . . It fused those directions together." If the tarpaulin work felt like beating a drum under a single spotlight, the recent work is quieter, a stepping in rather than bel-
lowing out. "Formally, the tarpaulin work really carried a punch. But then

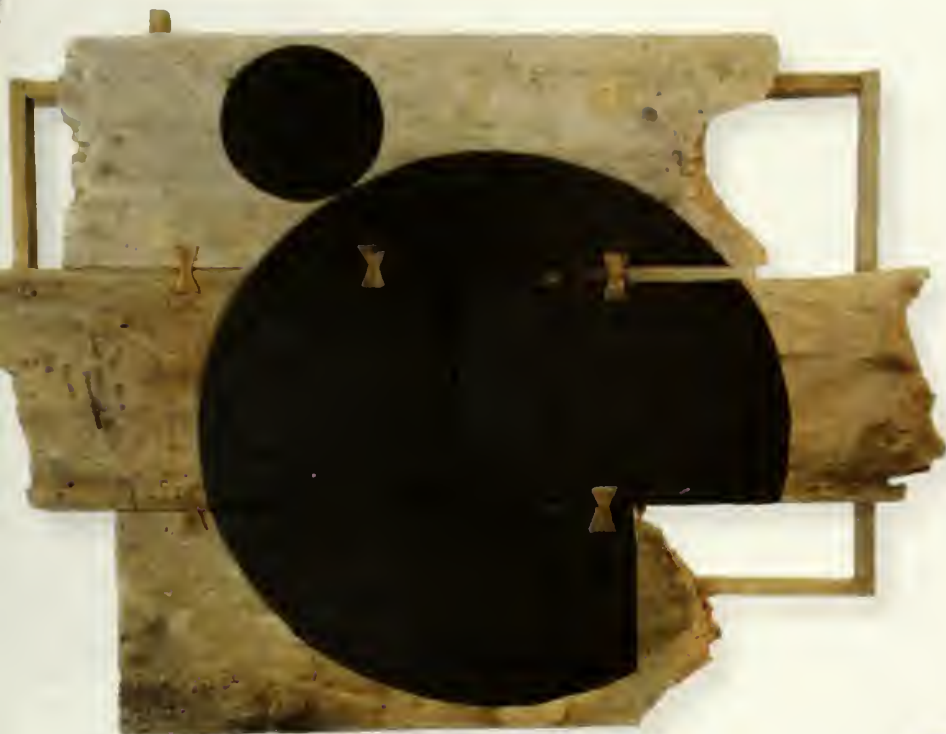
what's after that? I don't know that I would continue to get nourished by these things over time."

Nourish is a word Bowen often uses when talking about art, and it's a standard he applies to a lot of work, and not just his own. That something can be visually arresting is no measure of its sustainable visual imprint and ability to touch something beyond the superficiality of a pleasing arrangement of form, color, and texture. "I would hope as you get older that you don't care as much," he says. "I'm still agonizing over whether a shape is perfectly round or roughly round. There's a way to make a roughly round form, a perfect way to do it, and there's a bad way to do it." As physical restrictions limit the number of large-scale projects Bowen can now produce, recent work proves he can make equally powerful statements on a smaller, simpler scale. Some of the work he showed at Albert Merola Gallery last summer had an elegant refinement to it, quietly motivated by a natural curiosity and a light touch that pushed his work in new ways. There was a notable flattening out of form that suggested Bowen was attempting to achieve more by doing less: "I have a much more domestic impulse and that is to do more introverted, almost quiet work, withdrawing a little bit from the world."

Some of the work from the last few years is beautifully spare and intimate, with a considered natural elegance. *Soft Shim* (2012) is like an amorphous knot of pasta, or the newest member to Bowen's pilot whale inner-ear bone collection, with a radiant amber color of stained sailcloth twisted into an organic form that's marvelously, delicately alive. "I've been using fabric in work in one manifestation or another for quite a long time," he explains. "This was a little different, more 'out there' and less subdued, where the fabric is not so discreet. It's got this fragile life in a way." It's small, but it projects eight inches out from the wall, which activates the space with startling presence. It feels mercurial—you sense that if



(clockwise from top left) *Untitled*, 2005, wooden stool and tarp, 100 by 36 by 36 inches; *Angler*, 2012, oilskin, drum frame, and embroidery hoops, 50 by 33 by 9 inches; *Vent*, 2013, wood, 5 by 7 by 4 inches; *Soft Shim*, 2012, wood and sailcloth, 9 by 9 by 8 inches. ALL COURTESY OF ALBERT MEROLA GALLERY



"The outer edge and the patina were pretty darn good the way they were. This is a lot like what we were saying about not doing very much. It's simple, quiet. It's not whacking anybody on the head."

Bowen then proceeds to quote a line from Shakespeare's *Henry V*, from a speech before the Battle of Agincourt: "In peace there's nothing so becomes a man as modest stillness and humility." He brings it up to illustrate that the speech is also about war and the polarity of things—light and dark, and the points in between. "This is just how quiet form can be sometimes," he says, referring to *Port*, "compared to this," he adds, pointing to *Spindle Fly* (2013), a teeter-totter of wooden circles held in place with a ricochet of butterfly joints. It's fixed, but it feels very kinetic, or, as Bowen likes to say, "very jazzy. It's like some kind of crazy 1920s, 1930s dance! We need both qualities in our life, I guess."

Orme (2014) and *Jut* (2014) recall the easy clean grace in the work of one of Bowen's favorite artists, Ben Nicholson—but having seen *Jut* in two earlier

you were to leave the room and come back a short time later, it would have changed its configuration.

Vent (2013) is even smaller, a mere seven inches on its longest side. It couldn't be more simple, with a circle punched through the middle of a pleasing piece of driftwood and then pivoted open like a valve, a window to allow the passage of air and light. That's it—Bowen was hardly there but there just enough. "Talking about simplicity—that's about as bare-bones as it gets," he says. "This is just a small piece of wood that was very whole in its own right." Bowen's ability to recognize this raw perfection is unparalleled.



stages, I know it didn't come easy. Trying to make this look effortless is hard work, but Bowen is being a little more accommodating to an organic process these days: "There's a tendency that I have, in the earlier work especially, to try to make everything fit." Although a lot of the newer pieces still have this quality, he's more comfortable embracing the perfection of imperfection and leaving unintentional spaces and imprecise edges. *Orme* has some of that imperfection—a toothy gap in the upper right and an incomplete large black circle. "It's a way to get air into the space so the form breathes. I don't have to make everything whole," he says, noting that the viewer's eyes can complete those visual connections on their own.

In *Worm's Ruff* (2011), Bowen takes fabric and stretches it behind an elliptical template so that its ruffled edge is captured in the front. The bleached curve of a piece of driftwood with a bulbous end is nestled into a notch cut into the panel, like a femur to a hip, before it curves under and extends back to touch the wall. It's a wonderful piece, a little Gothic, playful, domestic, small in scale but big in possibility. "I love this little piece," Bowen says, chuckling. "I really like this crinkly edge of the fabric. It makes me think of the ruff edge on eighteenth-century or early nineteenth-century bonnets, or the ruff of an English collar from Tudor times."

My favorite piece from last year is *Chart*. Bowen takes two wooden boards that look like school tablets—but turn out to be antique bread boards—and offsets one on a small shelf to lean in front of and cover half of the other. In the front board, which is set within a black field, he inlays a concentric ring of rippling or



(top to bottom) *Orme*, 2014, wood, fabric, and asphaltum, 35 by 40 by 4 inches KEARNEY/MCDOWNELL COLLECTION; *Worm's Ruff*, 2012, wood and fabric, 10 by 12 by 2 inches; *Jut*, 2014, wood, fabric, and asphaltum, 31 by 27 by 8 inches ALL COURTESY OF ALBERT MEROLA GALLERY



current-like forms painstakingly cut out with a jigsaw. That same black field is carried over to the opposite board behind—no inlay though, just a blank black stare. Look head on, and the two black fields merge; step to the side, and the illusion disappears and the separate parts are revealed. This is Bowen at his best—approachable but poetically oblique enough to keep you coming back for more. It exemplifies one of his great strengths: Paul Bowen's work harbors mysteries, not secrets—and there's a big difference between the two.

It's mid-May when Paul Bowen and I speak one last time. Spring has burst open its doors, but still holds Vermont at bay with cold frosty nights. Bowen has been busy in the studio preparing for his summer show at Merola, clearly excited to share what he's been working on. "What I'm

doing now is right on the edge," he says. "I'm painting on old wooden boards, direct painting. I just started using black oil paint and I fell head over heels for it. It's definitely taking on the landscapery thing." Two days later, Bowen sends me some images and I can see for myself—there are long horizontal images, clearly landscape, vestiges of a jetty's ambiguous structures, and a long, low, arcing horizon painted in raw applications of bright white against stark black. Other work continues the flattening-out trend: there are stripes, black and white; the development of the painted oval; a proliferation of black circles, some painted, some cut out—and all of it less than perfect. The work is raw, risky, and unapologetically alive.



When Bowen talks about the work being more domestic, it has mostly to do with scale: "It is a kind of intimacy. It's a little more one on one. Perhaps that's been the trajectory of this new work for quite a while. There are some bigger pieces, but I'm more content with the small work. It might be that my personal ambition, in terms of challenging myself, is that the work doesn't need, at this moment, to be on a gigantic scale. I'm thinking about the simplicity of the mark on a piece of wood and the consistency or inconsistency of paint moving across the surface in a simple way. I may be kidding myself, but I really think it's on the way to becoming painting."

The painter becomes the sculptor becomes the painter. "I just don't want to exclude anything," Bowen says, "but that's what I'm thinking in terms of my ambition right now. I've been thinking about this for a couple of years: just painting the bridge out there in front of the house and maybe making it in wood too. Pretty simple—rewarding without bells and whistles. It's almost as if the work has a will of its own, and you've just got to be obedient and go where it points you. How much is driven, and how much unfolds? It is sort of like a human dilemma—sometimes you just want peace and quiet, like a nice quiet house in the morning. The birds are singing, the occasional truck goes by," he pauses wistfully, "and all is right with the world." ▲

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(clockwise from top) "O" Shelf, 2013, wood and fabric, 28½ by 25 by 7½ inches; Chart, 2014, wood, fabric, and asphaltum, 24½ by 29 by 6 inches; the template used for Chart; Spindle Fly, 2013, wood and fabric, 18 by 15 by 6 inches. PRIVATE COLLECTION. ALL COURTESY OF ALBERT MEROLA GALLERY

Paul Bowen

MESSER MAN

By Pamela Mandell

WHEN I FIRST MET Paul Bowen in 1993 (it was a year before we would begin a relationship that, happily, has continued for more than twenty years—we were married in 2000) it was at the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown. I was the administrator and he was the visual arts coordinator. It was before the current building at 24 Pearl Street was renovated, when the first sign of spring was a vine that snuck through a crack in the wall behind my desk and slowly climbed its way toward the asbestos tiles in the ceiling. Paul's office was a small cubicle at the end of a low-ceilinged hallway. He was often found standing there, at his manual typewriter, punching out one key at a time with his index finger. As we began to share lunches together and become friends, I was intrigued to learn that as a child in North Wales he lived in a house called *Myrddin* (Welsh for "Merlin," as in the magician of King Arthur's Round Table), and when he saw a man with two attached garbage cans on wheels, a bristly broom, and a shovel, cleaning the gutters in the street outside his house, this sweeper, to him, was "the Messer Man" and he desperately wanted to grow up and become him.

One could definitely say that Paul, in his own fashion, has done exactly that. And I don't mean his piles of unsorted papers or tremendous clutter of miscellaneous scavenged and found objects, bits of furniture, broken tools, books, and so on, that take up half of the garage, an old maple sugar shack, and the attic of our home in southern Vermont. I mean, of course, the sculptures for which he has become known, which are often made with found or scavenged wood and objects such as cane-back chairs, fish crates, oars, and spools. I mean too hundreds of other things that Paul found while seeking material for his work in his many years as a beachcomber and a flea market, junk shop, tag sale, and free-pile scavenger. Some of these objects include the whale vertebra that has always had its place to the left of our fireplace, the old battered suitcase full of whales' inner-ear bones (what, Paul explains, was left behind on Provincetown's beaches after pilot whales were harvested for their oil), another container of hundreds of pipe stems from the 1700 and 1800s, another of antique doll parts, and another of children's handmade clay marbles—tender objects that call up entire lives lived long before we were born, a town whose streets and beaches we still walk, and houses in which we live.

In each of Paul's sculptures and drawings, there is communicated some part of the life he lived, as well as the passions developed in that life, especially while he was growing up in Wales in the 1950s and '60s. Paul was born six years after the end of World War II, the son of an architect, Stewart Powell Bowen, who, as a sapper, defused bombs during the war, and who drove Paul and his brother and mother all over the countryside on weekends with a worn and folded map of Wales to see standing stones, burial chambers, ancient battle sites, abandoned mines and quarries, chapels, churches, and old farmhouses. When Paul and I walked through a dense wood of wizened trees below his mother's house in Colwyn Bay, I marveled at the knowledge that the winding path upon which we ambled had been walked on by Roman soldiers over a thousand years before.



Red Harbor, 1991, watercolor on paper, 5½ by 4¾ inches COURTESY OF ALBERT MEROLA GALLERY

Once, on a visit to see Paul's brother in Canada, he pulled out the deeply creased, still carefully folded map used by their father as they toured around Wales and I instantly thought of the heavily tarred, folded bedsheets that was one of Paul's paintings created at the Newport College of Art in South Wales. Paul was a painter before he became a sculptor, and he has drawn and made monoprints, woodblock and potato prints, and Linotypes throughout his forty-year career. "I don't make too much of a differentiation between painting and drawing," Paul says. "If you see a canvas with pigment, and someone incised a line, is that painting or drawing?" Paul first began to draw in earnest at age eleven in a bathroom stall in the first boarding school he attended: "It was a way of having an independent life in such a controlled environment. There were two systems, the strict one of the school and another, hierarchal system of boys. And I did not fit into either of them." He used the toilet seat as a table, bits of broken-up walnut in the paint he salvaged from a plastic model plane kit as materials, and painted on leftover cardboard from starched shirts.

The undulating sepia paths in some of Paul's drawings represent waves in the sea and are made with watercolor, India ink, or walnut ink—prepared from the walnuts that drop from the tree in our yard. In the past he has also used squid ink (which he makes after fishing for the squid, extracting the black ink, and making a tomato and squid stew with the rest), toner from used ink cartridges, and other sources. Most recently, during one of our long walks in Vermont, he discovered a hardened black tree mold and his ink-invention wheels began to turn. With the metal nib of his ink pen, a bamboo stick, or brush, he traces these inks and watercolors across rice, antique, or, sometimes, heavy fibrous paper. Paul has worked with the empty pages from unfinished diaries or the partially used ledger books used by traveling salesmen or turn-of-the-century merchants. He looks for a specific texture to the paper's surface that will allow him an easy, gentle line. Sometimes he creates a nutmeg-colored wash in the background of his drawings by rinsing off the fresh, viscous ink and letting it dry, before applying new ink to the

surface. “Paul Bowen uses drawing as a tool, as a divining rod, as a journal,” James Balla of Albert Merola Gallery in Provincetown told me. “He has the need and desire to make marks, to record what he experiences, to look for discovery, and to express this all in beautiful, sometimes gritty, always interesting works.”

The spiral of sand that is the curl of Provincetown’s inner beach ending at Long Point, where old pilings, fishing draggers, scows, lighthouses, and Vermont’s covered bridges all figure prominently in Paul’s drawings. He has repeatedly drawn clamscoopers hunched over with their rakes at low tide; these diggers are self-portraits of a sort, as the figures could just as easily be beachcombing. In Paul’s drawings and prints, dark boulder-like images interlock or bump against his most familiar motif: a fishing boat depicted with a dark hull and the simple cross of bare masts. Paul describes the drawings he makes as belonging to three categories: those he draws from observation; those drawn from “things I have seen photographs of, or things I see and combine with imaginary situations—like one of my sculptures sitting at the end of a wharf”; and those that are “more like a map” and may be used as details and plans for his sculptures, depicting, for instance, how planes will meet or boards will be joined together.

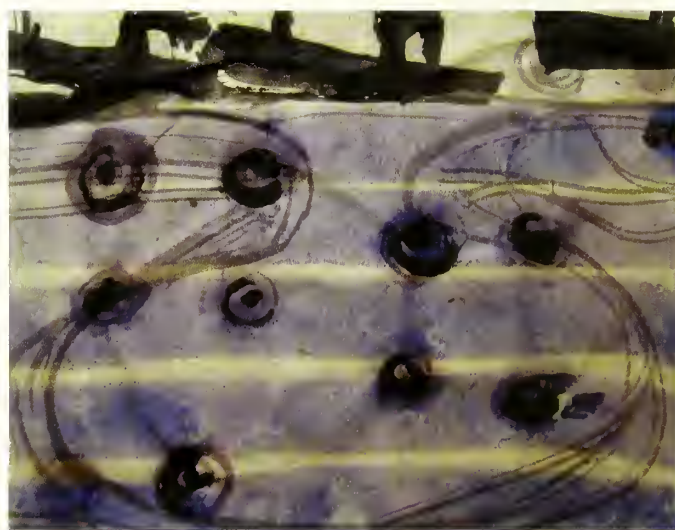
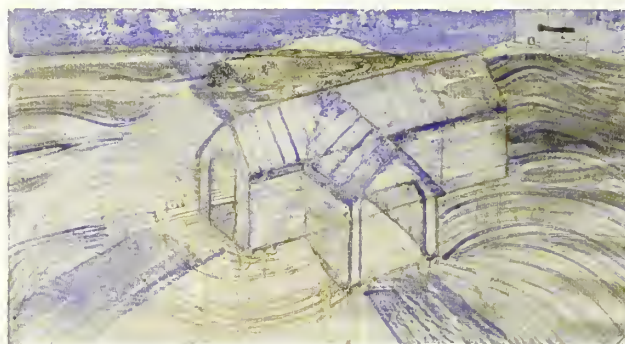
Just as spatial relationships between images are a central concern in his sculpture, they play a seminal role in Paul’s works on paper as well. In *Red Harbor*, a watercolor from 1991, a rich ground of cadmium red dominates the center of the piece; at the lower left we see a crisply framed blue sphere surrounded by a ring of broken boards. A horizontal strip of the same cobalt blue runs along the top edge of the piece with a tiny lighthouse just visible on the left and tan pilings on the right pushing into the dense red sea. The use of space, color, and the placement of images in this piece is both startling and carefully balanced. “Objects are contained in the field of activity,” Paul says. “Sometimes the space is like a window you see through and sometimes it is only a flat surface. Those things are having a conversation with each other.”

Joseph Beuys’s work has long been a sustaining inspiration for Paul: “It is always evident in Beuys’s drawings that he cuts out anything that is subservient to what he has to do. There is no folderol. There is a purity to the work.” Paul also cites the drawings of Samuel Palmer as being influential on the development of his own work because, he explains, “Palmer’s whole sensibility is steeped in a place. The farmers of Shoreham, village life, church spires, deep valleys, light, intense color. You get a sense of a nexus, an important place on the planet.”

Many admirers of Paul’s drawings and prints might say that he has done the same for Provincetown. Yet there is something else going on in these works on paper, something beyond location, place, or moment. “Paul’s drawings are out of any chronology, or historical narrative, or particular movement,” Kevin Garvey Rita of Garvey Rita Art & Antiques in West Hartford, Connecticut, told me. “I read somewhere that the real avant-garde is the oldest thing one can possibly imagine, and I think that gets to my feelings about Paul’s drawings. They are real and mysterious, visceral, elegant, brutal—out of time.”

In 1972, when Paul rolled and tucked the blackened and crackled bedsheet painting into a worn leather suitcase and carried it with him from Wales to the United States (where it was exhibited), this represented not just a movement from one life to another, but also his transition from painter to sculptor. In Paul Bowen’s drawings, we see something of the painter and the sculptor; we glimpse a bridge between the Welshman and the artist who has lived in the States for more than four decades; we sense the lingering instincts of a “Messer Man.” Although Paul’s materials, methods, images, and references have their own histories, the combined effect of these things in his work transcends any specific story. They communicate some deep feeling to the viewer that is both ancient and new, familiar and infinitely, exquisitely mysterious.

PAMELA MANDELL’s articles have appeared in the *Los Angeles Review*, *artscope*, and *Art New England*. She has previously written for *Provincetown Arts*, including a feature on Norma Holt, who was also the subject of a piece she contributed to the *New York Times Magazine*’s “*The Lives They Loved*.” She is the recipient of grants from the Vermont Arts Council, the Ludwig Vogelstein Foundation, and the Provincetown Cultural Council, as well as fellowships to the Vermont Studio Center.



(top to bottom) *Moon*, 2015, ink, watercolor, and gouache on paper, 5½ by 8½ inches; *Bridge Meeting*, 2013, watercolor and gouache on paper, 5½ by 9½ inches; *Bay*, 2013, ink and watercolor on paper, 8½ by 10½ inches; *Boat Barn*, 2015, ink and gouache on paper, 5½ by 8½ inches. ALL COURTESY OF ALBERT MEROLA GALLERY

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Santa Maria della Salute, Venice, 1950-51, oil and tempera on canvas, 28½ by 36 inches

a fund to the Provincetown Art Association and Museum to endow generous annual grants to talented mid-career artists.)

Hofmann, himself classically trained in Europe, where he had absorbed lessons in anatomy and perspective, insisted in his own teaching that the model, posing in his drawing classes, be used purely as a reference for indicating "forces" and "tensions"—directional arrangements suggested by the figure's gesture. In an interview with the art historian Jennifer Samet, Resika recalled, "Everyone thinks it's about looking at the figure or object, but Hofmann was showing you that it was about looking for relationships." Another Hofmann student, Howard Daum, who later became known as one of the Indian Space painters, was also important to Resika for his simple but profound concept of composition, which he likened to an "abacus," in its power to organize color and relations in horizontal and up-and-down movements, offering a visual way of calculating color arrangements.

Resika's talent developed quickly, and, when he was only nineteen, he enjoyed his first one-person show at the George Dix Gallery, which received notable acclaim. A painting from this period, featured in his retrospective this summer at the Provincetown Art Association and Museum (PAAM), is *Composition with Figure* (1947), which is completely abstract, flat, and clearly conceived along Hofmannesque principles. Hofmann urged a study of nature, insisting that students not focus on copying nature, but instead imitate nature's processes. Significantly, the curators, Donald Beal and Robert DuToit, have chosen to begin this survey of twenty-six paintings with this work, hidden for years, which so innocently predicts Resika's

mature fascination with prismatic refractions in his later paintings of piers, sailboats, and the bent reflections of these structures as they interact with the medium of water. In their selections, Beal and DuToit explained to me that they tried to "build bridges between naturalism and abstraction, without involving the brain, but using what you physically see when you enter the room." DuToit pointed out that two paintings by Veronese, which he saw at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, "remind me of Resika's pier paintings in their vertical scale and the cutting off of distant space."

I recall Resika's 1997 exhibition at PAAM, comprised strictly of his paintings of the Provincetown pier, which I reviewed for *Provincetown Arts*. I had visited the artist's studio in New York, wandering its great rooms and wondering about a little prism sitting on a table. Resika mentioned that he had just purchased it at the gift shop in the Museum of Modern Art. If a prism refracts white light into the spectrum of colors that are visible when separated, then Resika, in this inaugural composition, was expressing his own understanding of these multiple facets of a single vision. Bemused, he remarked on the continuity between his early painting and his later painting, saying, "You are always who you are."

Perhaps it is reasonable to posit that Resika, rising in recognition amid the notable artists in New York, sensed that he was hampered by his own facility. If modern art came easily to him, then he would choose to be challenged by the Old Masters. Paradoxically, the developing artist was driven to learn from the accomplishments of the past, which had grounded Hofmann so thoroughly in the history of painting. Resika

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SELINA TRIEFF, *With A Purple Moon*, 1989, 60 x 60"

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Composition with Figure, 1947, oil on canvas, 39 ¾ by 45 ½ inches

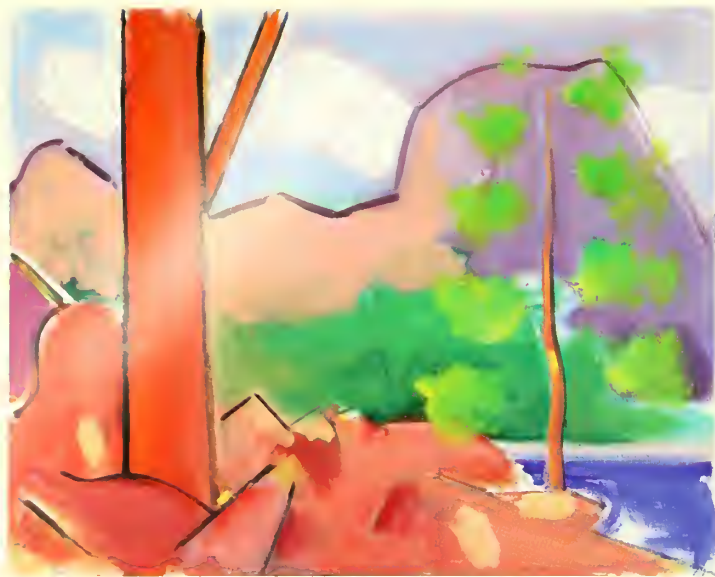
was conflicted by his devotion to figuration even as the advanced artists he respected were abstract.

Consequently, during the years most young people went to college, Resika journeyed through Europe, supported by his father, a self-made businessman who recited by heart the poems of Coleridge and Shelley as he puttered with motors in his electric machine shop in East Harlem. Here, he provided his son with a studio on the floor above his shop, along with an abiding love for the elliptical way poetry could express the ineffable. In the four years he spent in Europe, Resika lived in Paris, Venice, and Rome, painting, going to museums (“I must have copied El Greco’s self-portrait a thousand times”), and meeting expatriate American artists, such as the eccentric Edward Melcarth, whose show in New York Resika had seen before he left. “He was a great hater of modern art,” Resika told Jennifer Samet. “He was connected, though, a friend of Peggy Guggenheim—he made those butterfly eyeglasses that Peggy Guggenheim wears in old photographs. He had great culture, but with me, I had so little, so it was sort of like being crazy.”

Melcarth knew of a palatial studio available in Venice, recently vacated by a mutual friend, the artist Peter Ruta, whom Resika had met in Rome. Resika took this studio, remaining two years before returning to Rome for a year. In Venice, a city of islands, veined with canals and connected by hundreds of bridges arched to allow boats to pass underneath, the artist slowly absorbed the Venetian painters, especially Tintoretto, Titian, and Veronese, who had been disparaged by the art community in New York as being inferior to the Florentine painters, such as Giotto, Piero della Francesca, and, Hofmann’s favorite, Michelangelo. From his window in Giudecca, Resika looked across the Grand Canal at the stately Santa Maria della Salute, which he painted in 1952. The basilica, constructed to commemorate the city’s deliverance from the Black Plague, had been famously depicted by Canaletto, J. M. W. Turner, and John Singer Sargent. In Resika’s fresh view, the prominent features of its echoing domes



Self-Portrait, 1974, oil on canvas, 24 by 20 inches



Big Spencer, Lobster Lake, 2005, oil on canvas, 32 by 40 inches



Evening Still-Life, 2014, oil on canvas, 24 by 30 inches



Indian Blanket, 2005–07, oil on canvas, 62 by 50 inches

To Possess

THE PAINTINGS OF PAUL RESIKA

By Jennifer Samet

TO LOOK AT Paul Resika's work is to see the probity of the search—the dance between surety and questioning. I see his work as an ongoing attempt to *possess*, to synthesize the motif into fundamental form through sustained observation and simplification.

Resika has said, about beginning to paint the Provincetown Pier, that he recognized it, knew it was his subject. In this way, he was able to play with it endlessly, use the forms of the houses, water, and boats in countless variations. To own the subject matter is to see it through one's personal, ever-changing lens, to project onto it a shifting perspective.

If the right to touch with implicit permission is the ultimate sign of ownership, Resika's paintings use the artist's mark as its signifier. His paintings of the 1960s and '70s kept the figure at some remove, but in his later work, middle space is eliminated. Resika puts everything within reach: woman, flower, sails, fish, wave. Despite his fluidity of line, the space between the touch of paint and the physical world is never reconciled, and thus longing remains present.

In his world, beauty—even prettiness—is worshipped, not dismissed. Resika is not one to resist visual seduction; rather, it is his central aim. However, Resika also speaks of Federico García Lorca's concept of *duende*, and the Spanish tendency to celebrate death. "That 'mysterious force that everyone feels and no philosopher has explained,'" Lorca says, quoting Goethe. "Those dark sounds are the mystery . . . that we all ignore, but from which comes the very substance of art."

Resika's work plays with the tension between pictorial symbols and three-dimensionality, and, in his later work, he approaches resolution, fluidly moving between the two. This constant shift between flat geometric shapes and volumes

is the (very slight) distance between us and tangibility, where desire remains. Although for decades Resika's work has been rooted in geometry, he acknowledges that he is no longer in that place. The *duende*, as Lorca says, "rejects all the sweet geometry we understand," and thus it is another territory Resika now summons.

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The Striped Cat, 2003, oil on canvas, 76 by 51 inches

and needle-nosed spires become cemented in time against the movement of the water, while a somber sky is lowered, as if bowing to solemnity, allowing the whiteness of the marble structure to stand forth, gleaming with the health and hope it symbolizes. In the foreground, two men move about on a long, low-to-the-water sailboat, its two masts stayed by taut lines that create open triangles—apertures for framing the central subject. These triangles adumbrate the prisms that will refract planes of color in the artist's late pier paintings.

When Resika returned to New York, he went through an intense decade inspired by the landscapes and portraits painted by Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot. Like Corot, Resika sought the eroticism of the pastoral, an idealization of the simple pleasures available in the countryside. Resika would often drive a short way into a deep New Jersey wilderness, painting the fallen trees abandoned along the Ramapo River, mourning their isolation and neglect. The cup of coffee he bought in New York was still hot when he arrived, transported into dense vegetation and splashing water, a place devoid of people and their urgent concerns. Resika made other excursions to Mexico and the south of France. During this period he painted his own *Self-Portrait* (1974), his beard dark and his mien defiant amid the foliage of Corot's ten thousand greens, pierced by shafts of light. Resika's neck, accented with a white collar, signals a kind of priestly sanction. In one of Corot's own self-portraits, painted in 1840, the artist is wearing a dark beret, its oval shape echoed in the black palette he holds in one hand.

One sees perhaps unconscious reference to the artist's ergonomic palette in one of Resika's late pier paintings, *Moon, Triangles* (2002–04) (see back cover). Resika's habit of waiting at least two years before he exhibits a new painting indicates the importance of slow gestation in his process. The full moon in this picture, blank and unblinking like the eye of an owl, observes from beyond the tidal cadence acting on the boat below. Incised on a glowing crimson ground, two graphic triangles measure a concentrated scene of a boat hull beaming the colors of its pale blue and soft yellow upon the water it floats on. The colors are joined in an S shape, which, in its flopped reflection, takes the sinuous form of an hourglass. All the while, imposed as an indomitable background, the mysterious black palette comes alive in the water, acting as a dance partner to the reflected colors.

A later painting, *Sweeney in Summer (Red Island)* (2007), beguilingly beautiful, is one of a series Resika painted on sojourns to a mesmerizing lake in Maine, isolated, pristine, and a source of fascination for geologists for its rock formations showing eons of glacial evolution. The title makes a mythic allusion to the great Irish warrior, Sweeney, whose independent spirit was the cause of his own downfall. One feels the fullness of his utopian resting place, which he idealized as the location of perfect life. Resika situates Sweeney in the high season of his life's arc, summer, rich in reddening ripeness,



Sweeney in Summer (Red Island), 2007, oil on canvas, 64 by 51 inches

swaddled in comforting embraces, radiant amid involuntary heat waves, swooning amid calming blue caresses, the towering edifice organized like a spinning gyroscope, motion so balanced that wholeness and harmony appear in a kind of epiphany.

The curators of his latest exhibition have chosen to sequence Resika's paintings in a loose chronology, intending especially to highlight phases and connections of a long career. Early on, Resika learned to paint "upside down," turning the orientation of his canvas so that he could see how the image looked transposed. He was mindful that Willem de Kooning used an easel that he could rotate. Resika also uses mirrors to see how the image looks when flopped, mindful of Rorschach's experiments with folded inkblots, offering the balanced proportions of symmetry to an otherwise uninteresting image.

When we experience visually, our conscious thinking is bypassed; Resika believes we can

discuss pictures with words, but that does not replace the experience of looking. This is why he often asks poets—such as W. S. Di Piero, Mark Strand, David Shapiro, Charles Simic, and John Skoyles—to write introductions to his exhibitions. One of Resika's closest friends, the writer Arturo Vivante, saw significance in where the artist positioned himself to paint the Provincetown pier, going out onto the flats at low tide, which, washed clean, had become, Vivante noted, "virgin territory." Vivante once observed that "Resika's forms are the sublimation of matter. Therefore, his landscapes are 'trans-figurative,' the term *figurative* being inexact in describing the quality of Resika expressing the mystery of the known, which is no less strange for him than the enigmatic. He seems fraught with an almost intolerable degree of individuality." ▲

CHRISTOPHER BUSA is editor of Provincetown Arts.

Danielle Mailer

ON KEEPING THE TAPESTRY WHOLE

By Susan Rand Brown

JUST AS THE PRESENCE of a New England lighthouse announces safe harbor, Danielle Mailer, daughter of Adele Morales Mailer and Norman Kingsley Mailer, is today a resilient beacon for family and friends. The second-oldest of Norman's five daughters, Danielle's exuberant, dreamily patterned silhouettes are becoming as recognizable in their landscape as Sister Mary Corita Kent's Vietnam-era *Rainbow Swash*, facing Boston's Southeast Expressway.

"Keep the family tapestry whole," Danielle's father implored toward the end of his long, complicated life. She has embraced this charge in her art, most assuredly in her dancing figures, bodies tattooed with personal symbols, family lore, and world mythologies, which maintain a precarious balance and Zen-like calm despite risky altitudes—just as Norman was known for in sharing his penchant for high-wire acrobatics with his children.

Having navigated the personal and creative shoals of girlhood and young womanhood, Mailer speaks candidly about coming into her own, as artist and woman, taking risks to embrace her intuitive rhythms without fear of criticism from the inner parents whom, arguably, we all carry. Being a Mailer meant being born into a creative pressure cooker. "It's very hollow, to be [known only as] someone's daughter," she said toward the end of a candid slide talk to the Norman Mailer Society, speaking during the society's fall 2014 meeting at the invitation of Michael Lennon, Norman's official biographer and a Mailer family friend spanning many decades.

Yet accepting her legacy has also brought creative rebirth, as tangible as her soaring two-dimensional sculptural sheets of shaped aluminum that transport a child's sense of wonder and delight (as Matisse's cutouts please our inner child) to their mostly outdoor habitats: a freestanding mountain lion (with a Norman Mailer quote in its belly) commissioned by a library; a prancing pony twenty feet long, from inky-black nose to curlycue tail, mounted on a brick wall; and highly decorated aristocratic cats and airborne women ripe with inner lives—all announcing, as a full-moon tide can be said to announce, Danielle Mailer's ascendancy.

As one drives down a narrow two-lane road a distance from rural Goshen's town center, a dot on a map within Connecticut's Litchfield County and the area where the family of her musician-husband Peter McEachern, trombonist and frequent performer at the Litchfield Jazz Festival, has roots (a brother-in-law heads the Torrington Historical Society), Mailer's welcoming studio sign comes up suddenly, a leafy giving tree and a bowl of green pears signaling fruits of the earth. She appears from the far side of a wooden barn overlooking an open meadow, long dark hair and dancer's carriage gesturing entry into a cozy, bright work space within view of the meandering Marshepaug River—an urbanite's dream of postcard New England—where we sit facing one another. Danielle is very much a "girlfriend," high-spirited, funny, and digressive. Her storytelling ability is inherited from Norman, though, where he preferred verbal combat and dry wit, she substitutes a charming, modest diffidence.

Within this serenity, distance transcends actual mileage from the West Village apartment of her girlhood (a "creative collage, like an installation" is how she describes it) where she lived with her mother, now frail at age ninety, and the Brooklyn Heights brownstone where, beginning as a young child, she spent countless weekends under the occasionally erratic supervision of her famous novelist father.



Dreaming in Color, 2012, cutout wooden figures painted with acrylic, 16 inches tall
COURTESY OF BERTA WALKER

Norman maintained a lifelong love affair with Provincetown, beginning in the 1940s and extending through countless novels, biographies, essays, films (his noir *Tough Guys Don't Dance* was shot in town), nine children, and multiple marriages—all six wives and numerous girlfriends lived with or visited Norman in the town where he felt most creative and relaxed. He inhabited numerous residences around town, plain and fancy (also spending a summer in Wellfleet), before settling into a bayside brick Colonial in the far East End, a few sandy feet from Robert Motherwell's Sea Barn studio.

In *The Last Party: Scenes from My Life with Norman Mailer*, her 2004 autobiography, Adele Mailer recalls Norman's ties to Provincetown: "Norman had been in love with Provincetown ever since he went there with Bea [his first wife] in the mid-forties. 'I want to share it with you,' he told me, 'because I know you'll love it. It's a Portuguese fishing town with a beautiful harbor and a pure north light that's perfect for painters.'" This was a nod to Adele's art world connections: she was an eager student in Hans Hofmann's New York classes, painting alongside Lee Krasner, Elaine de Kooning, and Helen Frankenthaler before she met Norman. Even today, Danielle says, Adele continues to paint.

The couple formally wed in 1956 after a stormy romance that began in 1951 (Mailer describes her parents' sharing a taxi a few hours after meeting as "spontaneous combustion"), moving just before her birth in 1956 to a large Colonial in Bridgewater, Connecticut, not far from New York City. This self-imposed hiatus from their urban roots was prompted by Rose and William Styron, who themselves had escaped "temptress Manhattan" for

the solitude of Roxbury, not far from beachheads established by literary elders Malcolm Cowley and Arthur Miller.

In *The Last Party*, Adele describes the Bridgewater years as ones of relative contentment: she cooked, painted, and cared for their “adored” toddler girls (Danielle’s younger sister, Elizabeth Anne “Betsy” Mailer, was born shortly after this move), while Norman wrote in his studio. She was also traveling into Manhattan to continue studying with Hofmann, and, at Norman’s urgings, formalizing her penchant for drama—Adele’s candid descriptions of domestic scenes starring herself spin from outrageously funny to very sad—at the Actors Studio.

The Mailer family’s first full Provincetown summer came in 1960, when they rented the Hawthorne barn, at the crest of Miller Hill Road, planning for a long, peaceful summer. “The town was perfect for children,” Adele writes. “But ideas are one thing and what happens is another” is a bit of wisdom attributed to John Cage that perfectly describes that summer, which began in idyllic days-at-the-beach mode and spiraled into Norman and Adele’s drug-fueled “summer of horrors.”

Problems continued after the family returned to the city, reaching their nadir during the infamous late-night brawl when Norman, in a rage, stabbed his wife. It took Adele years to heal: from the injury, which left a permanent scar, and from the collective trauma. “My girls (were) . . . the only certainty in my life,” she writes in her memoir, also referring to her anguish, transcending the physical, as “my wounded heart.”

Now in her late fifties, Danielle exudes the dancing, colorful, playful spirit reflected in her art, pulling energy from the life she has built around her husband and their blended family, with three adult children: Isabella (her daughter from a former marriage) and Peter’s children, Colin and Hayley. In addition to her full-time painting career, Mailer teaches art at the Indian Mountain School in Lakeville. She is also very attached to the extended Mailer clan of eight children, and has a fierce loyalty to Adele and Norman. She describes herself as reflecting qualities and interests of both parents—the chrysalis holding fast to the tree, and then emerging (miraculously) stable and grounded.

As I listen to Mailer speak about her family history, what comes across is how the most profound and profoundly personal parts of her imagery connect directly to Adele’s wounding, including the fact of it, how close the incision came to the heart itself—ten inches of stitches were required to close her chest cavity, and healing followed only gradually. Mailer’s own healing journey came through her art, whose iconography, such as the orange chili pepper attached to a vine, often reflects her mother’s Peruvian heritage (although not Adele’s large Abstract Expressionist paintings). There are also darker images—for instance, a knife cutting into an apple.

Mailer started talking about her work as relating to her mother’s trauma only a few years ago. “My focus on the torso is all about what happened to my mother, and the scar,” Mailer says. “She actually had to go to the hospital to have surgery after ‘the event,’ which is how my father always referred to it. This was pretty terrifying terrain.

“Through my art I was able to crack open the door and look in on the morasses of complicated emotions. As a child, most likely to protect myself, my mother’s stabbing event was couched in nonchalance. Partly because her ribbon scar directly dissecting her torso was ever present (she was never shy to show off her midriff), and partly because people would often comment, ‘Oh, was your mother the one who was . . . ?’ I managed by relegating this event to the mundane. I remember thinking, ‘My hair is brown, I’m five feet tall, and my mother was stabbed,’ each fact occupying equal importance.

“It has been by painting the torso over and over, embellishing each with pattern and color and private symbols, that I’ve paid homage to my mother and her strength, despite the wound that cannot ever completely heal. Maybe I’m trying to mend my own heart as I try to fix hers,” she tells me, her voice steady.

Mailer’s highly decorative, patterned torsos of lithe female figures, bending and reaching, or seated in meditative yoga posture, dramatize this mother/daughter bond, often depicted as multiple reflections of a single persona, jeweled bodies leaping or floating. Her *Dreaming in Color* (2006) shows women in flight, arms outstretched; a figure in free fall is painted within the chest cavity. There is a profusion of purple grapes, leaves, vines, and branching nerves, conflating inner and outer space.



Lioness at the Library, 2014, acrylic on aluminum, 6 by 15 feet COURTESY OF SCOVILLE MEMORIAL LIBRARY



Night Bird, 2014, acrylic on aluminum cutout, 10 by 10 feet, installed in New York City on the exterior of the Roger Smith Hotel

Mailer often hears that she closely resembles her subjects. The yoga series shows women in gracefully exaggerated poses, with long torsos and long dark hair, fantastically beaded and braided. “I used to think if I could draw the postures I could do them,” she says in a burst of self-deprecating humor. These paintings are on the small side, yet major in complex, symbolic content. This focus on the smallest detail, the tug to concentrate and miniaturize essential to Mailer’s process, balances the sweeping sensation of the overall image.

We walk around Mailer’s studio, which is filled with miniaturized cutouts on windowsills and paintings scrunched together covering the walls. In one of the paintings from the *Hidden Goddess* series, a rustic and surrealistic domestic scene is dominated by an oversized Granny Smith apple perched on an orange chair, living room walls punctuated by paintings within paintings: a cat, and the torso of a woman surrounded by chili peppers, her hair extending upward to form a leafed-out tree.

Mailer's obsession with artichokes reappears, like the chili peppers, in paintings and cutouts: "My mother and I would sit around and eat artichokes whenever there was something to be anxious about. We'd seek refuge in the kitchen; she would steam them, and we'd eat them, winding up with piles of skins. It became a ritual, a way to ease the tensions of the week."

Cutting Ties (2001) uses a full range of Mailer's vocabulary to explore complex familial struggles. Its central figure is seated or standing in repose, hands clasped in prayer, birds resting on each arm, butterflies with unfurled wings hovering at the breastbone. A cord circles the figure's neck, directing visual attention to a pair of upside-down floating mini-figures. One end of the cord is fastened to the figure, with a knife piercing a red apple covering her torso. The other figure, almost a mirror image except that within the torso image lodges an umbrella waiting to unfurl (paralleling the open-winged butterflies), has cut free. Chili peppers and spiky-tipped purple artichoke shells anchor the four corners.

"I was born with the inclination to make patterns," Mailer says, standing before a recent painting, whose shapes spiral into repetitive arcs blossoming from a single point, an effect resembling Escher drawings. Does she ever use a stencil? "Never!" is the mock-horrified response. "Stencils aren't interesting to me. It's always freehand. You are painting what you cannot see, channeling some kind of instinct. You are giving a name to something with a unique language of its own, that becomes known as it unfolds."

"The pattern is always a desire to connect to something that is beautiful, that is balanced, that feels good to look at. Sometimes I'll work on a painting until I get that balance . . . it's an unearthing in a sense. This is hard for me to talk about; it is so unpremeditated and nonverbal."

Mailer sees her flat, silhouetted sculptures, "sculptural cutouts," as an extension of her paintings: using a two-dimensional metal surface as her support, she is able to explore an expanded, imagined space, unlimited by the picture plane. "It starts with the foot," she explains, "and becomes more substantial. By the knee, I have some sense of the direction it's taking. Every dot is intentional."

Mailer describes how, in the evolution of her work, organic, almost surreal, pattern combinations—such as Medusa-like hair transfigured into a tree—grew to resemble images from world mythologies. "My father wanted his children to have a liberal-arts college education. So, even though I was accepted by RISD (Rhode Island School of Design), to compromise, I went to Bowdoin College in Maine, where I had wonderful art teachers, and also studied art history, literature, and world religions—Jung, the collective unconscious. It's all in the work." Norman's *Ancient Evenings*, with its allusions to Egyptian mythology, was "hugely



Hidden Goddess, 2013, acrylic on canvas, 24 by 18 inches

inspirational," she says. "I had it on my bedside for years."

Mailer also describes the influence of her childhood on her work: "Though my mother's home was infused with art in every corner, she was more likely to take us out to do fun kid things, like a trip to the Central Park Zoo or FAO Schwarz. Norman took us to the museums. As a child, I was having trouble learning to read, but he also noticed that I was artistic, so he tried to cultivate that in me. This was his loving gift. Every bit of art I did he would compliment. So, partly because he recognized that art was my strength (unlike my sister Betsy, who was always going to be the writer), we often went to the Museum of Modern Art; on Sundays, that was our church."

"He was obsessed with Cézanne. He would conduct a lecture as though we were art graduate students, talking about the drapery, how by cropping off a section one could see the drapery transform into mountains. Then we would go to Trader Vic's for lunch. We had our Shirley Temples and he had his whiskey sours. It was very cozy. The day ended with a trip to Rizzoli and the gift of a giant art book. Hieronymus Bosch, Matisse, Picasso."

Norman also found his own refuge in art, and delighted in drawing, painting, and making sculpture (Adele writes about his furious attempt to "make a Pollock" as well as an anatomical cast of his privates) at different times during his life. Provincetown's Berta Walker Gallery, where Danielle M. is represented on the Cape, has exhibited Norman's playfully Picassoesque Sharpie portraits.

Mailer also praises the faith Berta Walker has shown in her work, especially the cutout forms:

"She has such integrity as an art dealer and is fiercely supportive of her artists. I just adore her and love being a 'Walker Woman.'" Mailer refers to her cutout silhouette directly outside the Berta Walker Gallery, as *Berta's Blue*. "This muse is from a trio created for a show I had in December 2014 at the Five Points Gallery in Torrington, Connecticut," she explains. That summer, these figures arrived at the Berta Walker Gallery, to be displayed as swimmers occupying two of the three rooms within her space. Then *Berta's Blue* went on the facade outside, to greet the larger world.

For the earlier *Lioness at the Library*, a freestanding outdoor silhouette commissioned by the Scoville Memorial Library in Salisbury, Connecticut ("because my father's a literary lion," Mailer jokes), she included a quote from *The Spooky Art*, situating the words in the belly of the lion: "In my ancient time when I was a boy, if you wanted to learn something, you had to get up on Saturday morning and go to a library." She says, "It's about as basic a quote as you can get, and the beginning of what later became 'the daughter series,' pieces with women and books."

Mailer explores Norman's presence in this creative continuum: "While my mountain lion offered Dad's presence in this most modest of ways, these twelve-foot gals incorporated favorite quotes from Norman's novels, placed boldly on the face. It was an urge I had to follow, but I held my breath through this process, wondering whether I could make these pieces, which were so much about Norman, and survive. The beautiful thing that happened was that I was able to incorporate Dad's presence and still hold on to myself. This sounds dramatic, but the feeling of being in his shadow has been a lifelong theme. Maybe one of the perks of being on the other side of fifty is that there is room for both of us in my creative process."

Speaking to the Norman Mailer Society, Danielle described the magical year, 1987, when she lived with her father in Provincetown, when she began to paint still lifes: father and daughter shared meals and talked mostly about food. She praises Norman and his painter-wife of thirty-three years, Norris Church Mailer, for coming to all her gallery openings and always buying the first painting so there'd be that "momentum-building" red dot on the wall.

When speaking before the Mailer Society, she elaborated on the special closeness she felt toward her father just before he died: "When Dad was dying, I would be running to the hospital, carrying paints and paintings under my arm for a show in New York. These paintings carry my sense of grief." In a key painting from this period, which became part of the autobiographical series *The Good Daughter* (2012), the figure, a version of the artist, is both embraced and embracing. A long-limbed, grieving



The Good Daughter, 2012, acrylic on canvas, 8 by 8 inches PRIVATE COLLECTION

figure is supported within the familiar orange chair, wrapped in a blanket and holding a volume with an Egyptian woman on its cover, a nod to Norman's *Ancient Evenings*, the mythological novel on her nightstand for so many years.

Mailer circles back to the decorative quality of her work, and how it can be misunderstood, even discounted as whimsy: "I cringe when someone calls my work 'pretty' or 'cute,' because it is aesthetically pleasing, and has a certain quality that can make people feel good when they look at it. This can be confused with being superficial, or insignificant. Pretty and pleasing may be the outcome, but the journey is never simple and is often fraught."

Yet, ironically, making people feel good, bringing joy, is part of what Mailer is about: her signature, if you will. Crowds lining up at the Museum of Modern Art this past winter for Matisse's *The Cut-Outs* left gallery rooms, which were filled with luscious colors and forms, in a state of bliss.

"After Dad died," Danielle said to the Mailer Society, "I was devastated by the loss but I also felt a little freed up, not looking for his approval or disapproval: he was very vocal about what he didn't like. [That's also when] I started to do silhouetted figures in wood and metal. The larger they got, the more I could explore my patterns."

"I spent a lifetime struggling with anonymity and sense of self, because when I was growing up I'd be introduced—and I'd hold my breath, waiting for the 'it's Norman's daughter'—and I'd just retreat into myself. As I've grown, and my career has grown, my sense of self has grown with it, to the point where I was ready to incorporate my dad's own rich words within my creative process—a huge step for me."

Mailer plans to remain part of the Provincetown artist community. Even with Norman's death on November 10, 2007, followed recently by the sale of the family's East End home and the sale of the Brooklyn Heights apartment, the Mailer clan continues to gather in Provincetown for two weeks each summer.

"On my father's deathbed he grabbed my hand and said, 'Please do everything you can to keep the family tapestry whole,'" she remembers. "He spent a good part of his life keeping us close, despite the drama and the unorthodox parenting we were exposed to. It all added up to a kind of mortar that held us together."

Peter McEachern, Danielle Mailer's husband, played a larger role in the Mailer family tapestry as Norman was failing. In the early fall, Mailer and McEachern drove a very frail Norman—who had every intention of returning to town—from

Provincetown to Brooklyn. Norman went in for surgery at Mount Sinai Hospital a few weeks later, still confident of being able to "sneak home" to Provincetown, if he could be transferred to the Cape Cod Hospital.

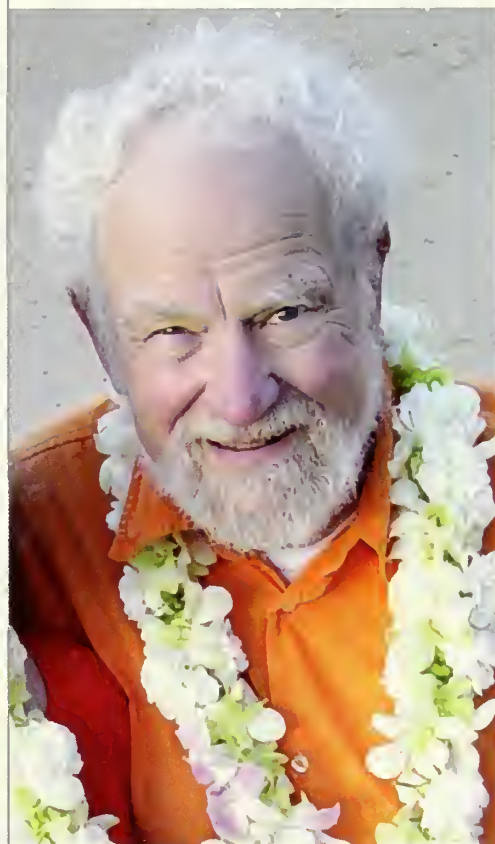
McEachern, a trombonist and music educator, sensitive to sound's healing properties and knowing that Mailer missed the ocean, drove to Provincetown and taped the sound of waves from the master bedroom window, complete with an occasional groan from the Long Point foghorn. He played the tape, on a loop, in Mailer's room. McEachern also played the trombone at his father-in-law's graveside service.

Norman Mailer is buried in the area of the Provincetown Cemetery that is populated by painters, poets, and renegades, including Robert Motherwell and Stanley Kunitz; it is an unprepossessing mix of sand and crabgrass referred to by Chris Busa, *Provincetown Arts* founder and editor, as "our Mount Parnassus." A white gravestone, where Norris, who died only three years after her much older husband, is also buried, contains words from Norman's novel *The Deer Park*: "There was that law of life so cruel and so just which demanded that one must grow or else pay more for remaining the same."

This has become Danielle Mailer's guiding mantra as she moves from the unique and undeniably heavy robes placed over her shoulders by two larger-than-life parents, accepting her unshakable legacy while fashioning her own place in the sun. ❧

SUSAN RAND BROWN has spent summers in her family's Commercial Street home since her teens, and began writing about the arts for the Provincetown Advocate in the late 1970s, covering local celebrities from painter Robert Motherwell and photographer Renate Ponsold to performers Wayland Flowers and Divine. She has since profiled many of the Outer Cape's major artists for Provincetown Arts and the Provincetown Banner, and is also a regular contributor to Art New England, covering Connecticut as well as the Outer Cape.

What thou lovest well remains, the rest is dross.

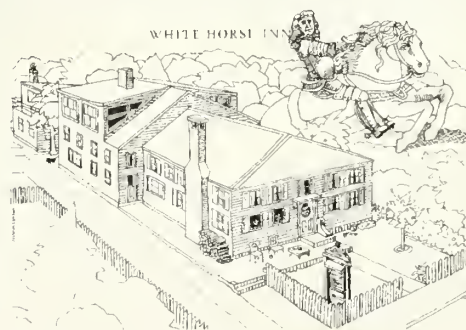


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OFF-SEASON RATES

Modern Spirit

THE ART OF GEORGE MORRISON

By Charles Giuliano

An earlier version of this essay appeared in the exhibition catalogue for Modern Spirit: The Art of George Morrison, curated by W. Jackson Rushing III and Kristin Makhholm (University of Oklahoma Press, 2013).

IN TERMS OF ART HISTORY and identity politics, the abstract artist George Morrison (1919–2000) is an enigma. He was an integral part of the mainstream avant-garde of the New York School and a running mate with the Abstract Expressionists, and yet there are few overt signifiers favoring one genre over another in his lyrical, meticulously crafted paintings, drawings, prints, and reliefs in the wood of his Native American heritage. Although he enjoyed critical success, including respectful reviews, prestigious teaching positions, museum-level exhibitions, and acquisitions, he has been denied a well-earned position in the canon of postwar American Modernism. Because of the purity of his abstract vision, it was only after achieving mid-career success that he was accepted within the community of Native American artists.

Based entirely on aesthetics, *Modern Spirit: The Art of George Morrison*, a five-venue exhibition that traveled across the country from June 2013 to April 2015, from the Plains Art Museum in North Dakota to the Minnesota History Center, reflects the work that would be appropriate to the museums and institutions that supported the artist during his lifetime. A short list of these venues might include the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis; the Art Institute of Chicago; New York's Whitney Museum of American Art, which exhibited and bought his work; the Rhode Island School of Design, where he taught for a number of years; and the Provincetown Art Association and Museum and Cape Ann Museum, located in two Massachusetts seaside towns where he summered.

This is in addition to the Native American-themed museums that have joined forces to celebrate an artist who made his mark in the art world. Morrison served as a role model for other Native American artists who were seeking an unfettered pursuit of their own inner vision and style. He defined a new possibility. To paraphrase Morrison, when pressed on the identity of his work, "I am a Native American artist so what I create is Native American art."

It is a point of view enforced by the art historian and curator W. Jackson Rushing III, who provided a group of us with an insightful tour of the exhibition. Most of our conversation revolved around the artists, theories, and movements in which the artist immersed himself while living and working in New York, France, Provincetown, and at a range of teaching gigs and fellowships. The superbly sophisticated artist was well read and traveled widely. He absorbed the zeitgeist of studios and bars during the era that Irving Sandler has defined as the Triumph of American Painting.

We discussed the wide range of his works, with their accents derived from automatic Surrealism, frottage, hints of Arp, Miró, Dubuffet, Davis, Guston, Kline, Nevelson, and action painting. Someone suggested there was an analogy to a wine tasting in viewing his work, which Rushing confirmed by commenting that Morrison had a refined taste for "wine, women, and song." He loved jazz, and the chunky, eccentric improvisations of Thelonious Monk were a particular inspiration.

This inspiration found an unlikely genesis in the events of Morrison's childhood. At the age of ten, he suffered severe hip pain that caused him



George Morrison working on wood collage, 1979 PHOTO BY DICK BANCROFT

to leave the Hayward Indian School in Wisconsin, where he was a boarding student, and consequently undergo surgery to treat tuberculosis of his left hip. The recovery required fourteen months in a hospital, including eight months with both legs in casts. To pass the time, Morrison took advantage of the hospital's diverse library and an abundance of art materials. Other surgeries followed, and Morrison would suffer from other forms of illness throughout his life, including chronic heart disease and, eventually, cancer.

The long period of childhood confinement led to a shy and introverted personality, and Morrison is often described as a man of few words who walked with a limp. This is also an insight into his oeuvre, which is contemplative, precise, and formalist. There is a sure, deliberate, and well-thought-through approach to his art practice. This prevails even in his most spontaneous work in automatic Surrealism and action painting.

While he was initially creating art as a form of distraction and recreation during long stretches of convalescence, his natural talent was quickly recognized and encouraged. By twelve he was making souvenirs to sell to tourists. After finishing high school, he enrolled in the Minneapolis School of Art. The training was primarily conservative, and the academic regionalist tradition is reflected in some of his surviving early work in the exhibition. In 1941, he was exposed to Picasso in an exhibition at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts—another strong influence reflected in his abstract work.

Having won awards and a scholarship, in 1943 he bought a one-way ticket to New York to enroll in the Art Students League. From that point on, he was firmly dedicated to creating art and he never looked back. He occasionally visited his family in the Grand Portage (Lake Superior) band of Chippewa in northern Minnesota, and in 1970, he returned there to live for the rest of his life, starting with a one-year, then permanent, appointment at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, where he was a studio

artist in the newly formed American Indian Studies Department. This entailed research for a new course, *Arts of the American Indian*. Inspired by his challenge, he and his second wife, Hazel Belvo, became members of the activist American Indian Movement (A.I.M.).

In discussing the life and work of a complex artist like Morrison, there are essentially two approaches. Some critics, curators, and art historians have taken the formalist approach of discussing the work only on its own terms. There is almost a sense of pride in not mentioning the heritage of the artist as a part of the critical discourse. However, much of the writing about Morrison attempts to unearth and discuss the Indian resources of the work and how that pertains to the larger discussion of contemporary Native American art. Perhaps a confluence of formalism, *ars gratia artis*, "art for art's sake," and identity and heritage discourse is the most plausible entry level for examining Morrison's rich and complex work. Indeed, the full range of all of these factors is at play in coming to grips with the oeuvre.

The horizon line, which appears in works from the 1940s, is a signifier or logo for Morrison. It is not always there among the many ideas and experiments in his work, but the landscape becomes more consistent as an idea after he returns to his Chippewa land and heritage. The illnesses he suffered in the last decades of his life caused him to work on an endless and much-coveted series of small landscapes. These intimate works abound with inventions of color and the textures of paint, and are reminiscent of the series paintings of Monet and their multiple variations and inventions.

For a time as an art student, Morrison worked in a frame shop. In the small paintings, as well as some exquisitely concise wood collages, the framing is an integral part of the work. Typically, he surrounded the work with an edge of silver leaf and then an outer perimeter of natural wood of the same width. It is simple and elegant in the manner in which it enhances the paintings.

There are many other wonderful works or series, and each one provides an insight into Morrison's

diverse and original techniques. While visiting Provincetown in the 1960s and '70s, the artist and his friends gathered driftwood along the beach. From this found, weathered material, Morrison created horizontal relief compositions with individual slices as tesserae in mosaic-like reliefs. They were an immediate sensation, and he received a number of commissions from collectors and corporations. One owned by the Amon Carter Museum, which broadly supported his work, is described as one of the most admired works in the *Modern Spirit* collection. That was confirmed in a letter to the artist from the director. In this work, he may have been inspired by his friend Louise Nevelson, who also exhibited at Grand Central Moderns. They swapped works, and her piece is illustrated in the catalogue.

As demand for the sensual and stunning relief works continued, Morrison used sculpted elements cut out of exotic species of wood. In 1977, Evan M. Maurer, the curator of *The Native American Heritage: A Survey of North American Indian Art*, commissioned a work for the exhibition. The resultant *Red Totem I* (1977) was its centerpiece at the Art Institute of Chicago. This initiated a series of masterpieces exploring the totemic theme. Typically, Morrison extensively researched the tradition of spiritual monoliths over many millennia in global cultures, and drawings of specific objects with his notations are included in the new exhibition. These large, freestanding wood appliquéd works are more deliberate in design and pattern than the initial pieces from found materials. They are stained with a color called Indian Red, and the significance of this name surely resonated



Black and White Patterned Forms, 1952, ink on paper, 10¾ by 8⅝ inches
COLLECTION OF THE MINNESOTA MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, GIFT OF GEORGE MORRISON



Provincetown, Sky-Seascape, 1970, found wood, 8 by 11 inches COLLECTION OF CAROLE ANN JONES



Red Painting (Franz Kline Painting), ca. 1960, oil on canvas, 47 by 79 inches LOAN COURTESY OF DORIT AND GERALD PAUL

with the artist and reflects an effort to conflate with his Native heritage on his own terms. The exhibition also includes the Heard Museum's extraordinary *Red Totem* (1980, stained cedar). In addition to wood reliefs and sculpture, Morrison produced woodcut prints and rubbings, works on paper that are much prized by collectors.

While he was intensively inventive and obsessive in his work, Morrison could be playful as well. Using postcard invitations for exhibitions, including those of his friends, and colored paper, he created vertical collages. He also borrowed images of other artists and expanded upon them to create his own witty works. The show includes an example of this in *Red Rock Variation: A Memory for Franz Kline Fragment*. The artist Franz Kline, who died young, was a close friend of the artist and godfather of his son, Briand.

Intricate, *horror vacui* drawings, such as *Untitled 1977*, a meticulous ink-on-paper work, are



Red Totem, 1980, stained cedar, 145 by 20 by 20 inches
HEARD MUSEUM COLLECTION, PHOENIX, ARIZONA PHOTOGRAPH BY CRAIG SMITH



Faraway Parade, Red Rock Variation: Lake Superior Landscape, 1990, 4 3/4 by 14 1/2 inches COLLECTION PHILLIP RICKEY AND MARY SULLIVAN RICKEY

absorbing and fascinating. The artist stated that he started work in a corner and, through an endless number of equally spaced curved and patterned parallel lines, eventually filled the space. In its all-over patterning, there is no obvious manner in which to approach or amble through this visual labyrinth, which is part of its charm. The work evokes similar approaches by Mark Tobey and Bruce Conner. While it is unlikely that Morrison knew of their work, he conforms to the spirit of this esoteric tradition of shamanism and spiritualism.

During our tour, Rushing was most animated in endorsing the landscapes, which comprise Morrison's primary focus after returning to his roots in 1970. The exquisite *Lake Superior Landscape* (1981) occupies pride of place as we enter the exhibition, which, after this introduction, is

hung chronologically. Another work of particular interest is *Witch Tree* (1981), inspired by a sacred cedar tree growing at the edge of Lake Superior that is said to be three hundred years old. In a range of mutations, it appears in a number of Morrison's abstracted works.

For me, this richly beautiful and sensual exhibition was the beginning of a keen interest in knowing more about the artist. In particular, I wanted to know more about the artist's Provincetown connections, which began in the summer of 1945. Was he a participant in the formative dialogues of Forum '49? Did he know its organizer, Weldon Kees, and did they share an interest in jazz? From the 1940s until his death, we can see that Morrison continued to be connected to Provincetown, with its intensive seasonal dialogues about cutting-edge American art. In correspondence with Chris Busa, publisher of *Provincetown Arts* magazine, Busa confirmed that Morrison was a friend of his artist father, Peter, particularly when they both taught in Minnesota. Busa also mentioned that he owns several Morrisons through exchange. One suspects that there are other works by Morrison in P-town collections, which will hopefully be a stimulus for further research and exhibitions in the future.

Modern Spirit is a groundbreaking exhibition that showcases the work and extraordinary talent of George Morrison, and it will hopefully provide this underrated artist with wider recognition. There is, however, a very real concern that by being presented in the context of Native American art, he will remain under the radar of the mainstream art world with its elitist critics and curators. In the same way that we see breakthrough innovation in Miles Davis's classic jazz album *In a Silent Way*, we can see that Morrison dedicated his life and work to breaking through barriers. His art and heritage belong to all, and will continue to inspire future generations. ▮

CHARLES GIULIANO is an artist, a critic, an art historian, and a curator. Currently, he publishes the online magazine *Berkshire Fine Arts*. He has held staff positions at the *Boston Herald Traveler*, *Art News*, *Art New England*, *Boston After Dark*, and the *Avatar*. During graduate study at Boston University in the 1970s, he began to research and write about the fine arts in Provincetown. He has curated and written essays for exhibitions for the Provincetown Art Association and Museum.

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Zehra Khan

CREATURE COMFORTS

By Megan Hinton

ART HAS THE ABILITY to do many things, inspire and influence, transform and motivate, but it can also simply entertain. When I look at Zehra Khan's work I feel like a kid who just found the prize in a Cracker Jack box: it surprises and delights me. Art made with a deliberate sense of humor can be rare in Provincetown, but using the quirky and whimsical for artistic expression has a long tradition in human history. Primitive people conveyed humor by drawing crude scenes for their amusement. Eighteenth-century painter Charles Gainsborough made pictures satirizing the British aristocracy. More recently, controversial artist Jeff Koons has made work to show the hilarious in what is normally banal. In the same spirit, Khan says the most important thing about making art is "to have fun and enjoy the process." The laughter and fun in her work are facilitated by the use of informal materials—although, upon closer inspection, Khan is also conveying more serious complexities of human and animal behavior.

The Provincetown art world can trace its historical lineage from sublime open-air American Impressionism, to mid-twentieth-century Modern abstraction, and, more recently, to found-object sculpture. The latter we see in the work of Paul Bowen and Bailey Bob Bailey, whose made-to-look-easy assemblage sculptures have influenced Zehra Khan. Her work has a new sense of informality and fearlessness in subject and material. In this multimedia work she goes beyond this art colony's expectations and is breaking new artistic ground.

While I was recently viewing a Provincetown Art Association and Museum (PAAM) members juried show, I walked by a sculptural piece entitled *Silver Cat*. I was struck with the familiar delight Khan's work conveys along with a sense of bewilderment: I found this little beast to be strange looking, though eventually kind of cute. The sculpture depicts a smaller-than-life-size cat, which, as the title implies, has a metallic coating that resembles duct tape. The resemblance breaks down expectations of traditional material use and meaning in sculpture, which is typical of Khan's work, in which materials defy formalism. Upon closer inspection and after reading the label, I discovered that the cat was made of acrylic paint on papier-mâché, rather than duct tape. Although Khan sometimes uses duct tape as a material, here she forms and paints the paper to achieve a plastic look. The silver color tricks her viewer into thinking the cat is metallic. According to Khan, the mimicking of duct tape is no more than a

happy accident, a marriage of random occurrence with conscious creation, or chance—which is an important approach to her process.

More intentional though is Khan's uncanny way of portraying this lustrous cat with a look of fear and wonderment. The expression is an example of her interest in, and effective use of, anthropomorphism in her work, attributing human behavior to her many animal subjects. *Silver Cat's* expression mirrored my own. The animal's stance is alert, with its tail upright in detection. I was watching him, and he was watching my approach. This is sculptural work, but also painting, and, furthermore, drawing, because it is mark-making on paper, a sort of suspended animation of an animal portrayed in unnatural materials.

In today's age of mass consumption and environmental doom, Zehra Khan refreshingly repurposes material, relaying the possibility that artists do not have to spend top dollar on traditional supplies to make good art. Khan chooses what is thrown out, found, preworked, wrecked, scrapped, and affordable to make compelling works of contemporary art. "Crappy office materials," for example, make up one of her favorite mediums. These experimental makings link new meaning to subject and material: drawings on blankets, quilts constructed with scraps of previous work, drip-painting paper sculptures of obsolete technology, and animals sculpted from flat surfaces, such as paper, cardboard, and tape.

Animals abound in Khan's work. Animals transformed from reality to a higher expression are her

idols and alter egos, and these pieces convey not only how the animals feel, but also how we feel when we view these unusual creatures. She has even expanded upon this anthropomorphization process by using paper drawings to sculpt clothes to fit her body and performing as an animal in her created environments, sometimes with collaborators. Khan likes to involve people in her art; the personae of her animals, in and outside of performance, illuminate the hazards of human relationships, as well as the subjects of "friendship, intimacy, closeness, life partners . . . the whole gamut in between. There was never an instruction manual on how to create trust, how to communicate, how to send 'signals.' Since love is the most important thing in the world, I try to sort my feelings out about it through art. The triumphs, trials, and tribulations."

In 2009 Khan received a master of fine arts degree from the Massachusetts College of Art and Design low-residency program at the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown. When she entered the program, she was creating oil paintings on canvas. But soon she left the heavy load of painting's historical tradition and began making large-scale drawings and installations. Upon graduation, she teamed up with artist Tim Winn, and together they drew, played, repurposed, photocopied, glued, performed, digitally documented, and, most importantly, had fun. In collaboration, they made multimedia and multipurpose works, such as installation rooms completely made of drawings and then documented through video while the duo performed in their drawn and sculpted environments.



Zehra Khan in an installation called *Sweetheart of All My Dreams*, created by Zehra and Tim Winn, 2010



(clockwise from above) *The Past Comes in Many Forms (FRONT SIDE)*, 2014, acrylic and ink on blanket, 93 by 86 by 1/4 inches;
Silver Cat, 2014, acrylic on papier-mâché, 8 by 8 by 6 inches; *Smoking Dog*, 2014, acrylic on papier-mâché, 10 by 18 by 10 inches

These video performances appear to be moving drawings, since everything—from walls to furniture to their bodies—is marked on. Now, as a solo artist showing at artSTRAND, PAAM, and venues beyond Provincetown, Zehra Khan is still amused by her work and is sharing this sense of folly with her viewers. This playful yet rigorous commitment to her art-making earned Khan a distinguished Massachusetts Cultural Council finalist award for drawing in 2012 and a prestigious Yaddo residency fellowship.

In conversation with Zehra Khan in her top-floor Provincetown harbor-view studio, she sits relaxed at her big drawing board. Among many works in progress is a two-foot-tall paper sculpture of Provincetown's Pilgrim Monument, which sits on the table teetering crookedly like the Tower of Pisa. Khan works as an art assistant for the artist-activist Jay Critchley, who, some years ago, produced cutout books so that consumers could make their own souvenir monuments in 3-D. Khan decided to put one together herself, and then dripped paint all over the surface. Jackson Pollock, like many other painters, interests her, but she takes the drip technique further: in her work, the paint interacts over a sculptural surface rather than on a flat canvas.

Khan also uses accessible materials to make unfunctional objects that appear to be functional. For instance, she stands by the economics of making art from what she can find: what is available

to her is a puzzle and she must figure out how to put things together. She takes cues from the all-too-short career of painter Keith Haring, who worked in a bold non-tentative fashion that was influenced by Graffiti art in the 1970s and '80s. Khan's hash-like marks are influenced by Haring, as well as by her Pakistani heritage. She expands this drawing style into a third dimension of objectivity and freedom by creating animal figures and objects that are free and far away from painting and sculpture's academic tradition. These creatures convey fun as well as serious behavior. She refers to them as "conduits for anthropomorphization."

Khan pushes the power of image-making to talk about how the imagination thrives in art and creates a new reality. A recent work, *The Past Comes in Many Forms* (2014), is astonishing. She used a found blanket—a friend found the blanket at the dump and gave it to her—as an experimental ground for a painting depicting numerous rats playing, drinking, and cavorting. Her mark-making employs subtle tonal shifts of primary colors in acrylic paint, but in reality the piece resembles a drawing.

Khan's signature drawing-dashes make an Arabic-like swirl pattern that transports the viewer around the blanket.

Before drawing on the surface, she slept with it nestled in the dunes, inspiring her transformative art. The blanket is a support that goes beyond the bounds of a traditional painting surface: it can also shape-shift into a three-dimensional functional object that offers a body comfort and warmth. Khan also plays with the stereotype of rats as repulsive creatures living in a dirty underworld from which we want to turn a blind eye. There is sheer beauty and mastery of drawing on the cozy covering. Again, Khan is able to identify human attributes and experience through our expectations of animal qualities. The unfairly maligned rats are reclaimed into creatures that we want to get close to and snuggle up with because of Khan's artful handling, which allows us to relate to their need for carousing and fun.

The blanket theme in Khan's work continues in *Charm Quilt*, a piece constructed of Khan's reused drawings, paintings, photographs, and writing, which was inspired by a visit to the New England Quilt Museum in Lowell, Massachusetts. Khan was especially struck by the fact that no two identical pieces of fabric are the same in a charm quilt. Scraps and discards from her studio have been cut into hexagonal shapes of uniform size to make the quilt, which is big enough to cover a queen-size bed, but not functional because of the paper's delicacy. Each hexagonal shape is unique and assembled in pattern to make the quilt, but in this case it is also a collage. Victorian-era quilters reclaimed old clothing and traded swatches with friends to construct charm quilts: although every piece is different in design, tactics are in play, such as adding swatches of solid color among pattern to create an ordered look.

An intriguing sorting appears in Khan's quilt. The hexagons move from light and dark, creating





(clockwise from above) *Charm Quilt (FRONT SIDE)*, 2014, mixed media on paper, 68 by 88 by $\frac{1}{8}$ inches; *Charm Quilt (BACK SIDE)*; *Boombox Interior Life*, 2014, acrylic on paper, 13 by 11 by 6 inches

gradation and shifts in value. Zehra has followed this traditional quilting format, yet her material's use defies convention: the use of old artworks makes a new orderly function of pattern, value, shape, and color to create a sense of harmony from reclaimed objects but also suggests the chaos of each individual discard. This arrangement reveals a private visual diary that has been deconstructed and cut out to make a beautiful bedcover. In quilted form, we only have hints of secrets. Such an alluring arrangement, despite the material's fragile paper quality, still creates a longing to come in contact with and seek comfort in the quilt.

Zehra's grandmother also made charm quilts, and the use of her own studio scraps is autobiographical and refers to her ancestry. This nod to heritage and tradition also reclaims quilting from "women's work" and craft into contemporary feminist high art.

Honoring the traditions of an earlier time is important to Zehra Khan. She innovates the traditional still-life genre by making sculptures of obsolete objects and technology using papier-mâché to support a loose or dripping application of Expressionistic paint. Her aim is to preserve something from a different era: the objects are corpse-like because they are obsolete, but she revitalizes them by accentuating their nostalgia and historical significance. Khan refers to these object sculptures as "relics"—a term that usually refers to ancient objects from ages ago.

In contrast, many of Khan's relics are more recent and were in use when she was born in the 1980s. *Boombox Interior Life* replicates the boom boxes that were symbolic during the dawn of hip-hop and graffiti art. Here, we see a connection between Khan's interest in the work of Jean Michel Basquiat and the jam-box style he was so prolific in before his untimely death. Basquiat may have painted directly on something like a boom box in a similar desire to use an alternative ready-made

surface for painting, but Khan takes this a step further by transferring something that was once functional into the unfunctional.

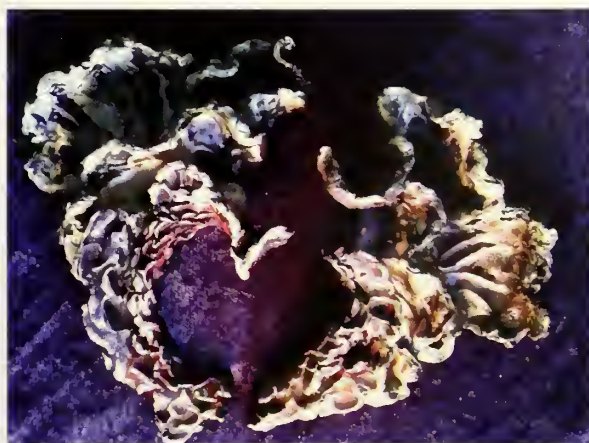
Boombox's blue ground exterior has a unique style of mark-making—controlled yet drippy, illustrative yet free. The marks suggest movement and sound; the music and bass beat seem to pound through the paper and paint to recall the cool, cutting-edge sensibility the boom blaster once symbolized. Khan uses the possibility of art to reveal what is not normally seen. The player's top is open to the viewer so that we can see beyond the exterior, or the sound of music: in this work, Khan anthropomorphizes an object. The words *interior life* in the title talk about what goes on *inside* the boom box, the inner workings that are hardly ever revealed—inside a machine, or inside any of us.

Zehra Khan uses mixed media to make her own rules, and then break them. She feels indebted to the painter Frida Kahlo, who, according to Khan, "made art to interpret her own life, regardless of what others thought." Khan says she thinks of Kahlo when she feels herself becoming constrained in her



work, and channeling such fearlessness has led her to make invigoratingly loose and lively pieces. Her visual breadth—drawing, painting, text, sculpture, installation, and performance—defy the categorization of Zehra Khan as just one type of artist. By reinventing subject and media, she is able to create work that reflects a playful sense of humor and, perhaps most importantly, the deeper meaning of being, in every sort of incarnation and consciousness. ▲

MEGAN HINTON is a painter and educator who lives in Wellfleet. She shows her work locally at the Tao Water Art Gallery in Provincetown and West Barnstable, Massachusetts. For more information about Zehra Khan's work, go to www.zehrakhan.com.



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Sarah Lutz

AND THE GARDEN OF EARTHLY DELIGHTS

By Jan Lhormer

SARAH LUTZ is one of those fortunate painters who follow in the long tradition of artists who are devoted to a rigorous studio practice in New York City during the year and migrate to creative meccas in Truro and Provincetown for the summer. And the influences that led her to this path were introduced at an early age. Teachers from her Connecticut boarding school guided Lutz's artistic path by recommending summer high-school classes at the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), as well as lessons at Truro's Center for the Arts at Castle Hill with legendary mentors Jim Peters and Paul Bowen. Lutz's family tree includes painters, potters, and architects who bestowed a legacy of work that encouraged her early immersion into art.

Lutz was born in Madison, Wisconsin, in 1967, but her father's career as a historian led the family abroad to Guatemala when she was nine years old, and this experience with Latin culture left impressions of exotic colors, patterns, processions, and perfumes that infused her canvases. Lutz also credits the coastal landscape by her Truro home and studio as influencing the watery surfaces and sea anemone-like forms that inhabit the illusive space of the paintings. She treasures time on Cape Cod, but craves the vibrancy and opportunities of New York for the off-season.

Last January, I had the pleasure of visiting Sarah Lutz in her Lower East Side studio, just north of the burgeoning LES gallery scene. She had recently moved in to the studio, and it retained the orderliness

one might expect from a newly inhabited space. A vast array of paint tubes and pigments lined a table, and an adjacent cart held a glass palette (dollops of oil paint freshly mixed), squeegees, cake-decorating tools, spray cans, and a brush collection, including a particularly unique multi-bristle tool from Paris. Spirograph and stenciling materials and bottles of glazing medium rested in a back storage area. Lutz has an insatiable love of process, materials, and discovery, which is integral to the multifaceted subject matter in her work. "I have become increasingly interested in creating varied, exuberant, and almost opulent environments within the paintings," she explained. "But the transition has been organic and gradual, combining many methods and materials and colors all together: synthetic and organic color;

impasto and thin veils of glaze along with spray paint, stencils, glitter, paper balls."

The left studio wall held a stunning medley of nineteen small paintings, evidence of her virtuoso use of color and composition, which conjures images of tropical locales. Spinning biomorphic forms within an aquatic haze are contrasted by ordered patterns from tile floors or other geometric configurations. In the center panel, one painting, *Rapture*, suggests a horizon bathed in deep scarlet reds. A pink burst of phosphorescent critters occupies the foreground, while small greenish circles rise—or fall—from the sky. The painting engages all of the senses through syrupy color, jeweled surfaces, clashing rhythms, balancing abstraction and inventive elements with references to the observed



Rapture, 2014, oil, polymer resin, paper balls, and spray paint on linen, 48 by 36 inches
(opposite page) Studio wall with nineteen paintings PHOTO BY JOSÉ PICAYO

world. She reflected on the transition in her work: "I started moving away from the more naturalistic, or even 'Old World' color palette in the mid-'90s. At the same time, I began experimenting with a wider range of materials and methods of both applying and removing paint."

Another area of the studio revealed pristinely wrapped monoprints just returned from the Art Basel art fair in Miami, where she was represented in an exhibition sponsored by Provincetown's Schoolhouse Gallery, and director Mike Carroll. Lutz values printmaking in its own right, but also as a means to develop new and unexpected ideas for paintings. Since 2006, she has worked with master printer Marina Ancona, the founder of 10 Grand Press in Brooklyn, New York. By layering transparent veils of ink poured over cut shapes of mylar, Lutz explores design and imagery while happening upon intriguing color possibilities. The smaller paintings on wooden boards are also breeding grounds for motifs or techniques that might find their way to a larger stage of stretched linen on canvas.

Along the back central wall, eight dazzling 48 by 36 inch canvases awaited completion for an upcoming one-person show at Mercy Gallery in Windsor, Connecticut. In this body of work, adept layers of floating orb-like shapes exist within a

sugary color palette. In *Claret*, flat anthropomorphic forms and patterns created through stenciling and spirograph techniques add weight within a disorienting, ethereal world. Imagery shifts toward body or mind associations, and less toward landscape. Lutz muses that she was likely inspired by her daughter's ballet performances, referring to the theatrical compositions on canvas as choreographed dancers within a stage. The show's title, *Tales from the Garden and Other Mythologies*, invites a narrative quality to the sequence of canvases, which Lutz views as a stop-action comic or graphic novel. Her ongoing dialogue with a virtual garden of earthly delights encompasses all that the artist loves: candy, jewels, summertime, motherhood, cooking, painting, and visual excess.

Since earning a master of fine arts degree from American University in 1992, Lutz has identified with abstract painting. Now a mid-career artist, she has earned recognition through solo exhibitions at New York City's Lohin Geduld Gallery, Kevin Rita's Brick Walk Fine Art in West Hartford, and Provincetown's esteemed Schoolhouse Gallery, where her work will be featured in a show this summer.

Artists who have influenced her include Expressionist greats Jake Berthot and John Walker, who visited Lutz's studio while she was in graduate school.



Claret, 2014, oil on linen, 16 by 12 inches

She refers to their critiques as "life-changing" for the validation and wisdom they provided. Philip Guston is another strong influence, as is evident through her joy in combining cartoon-like piles of symbolic forms within a conceptual space, but Lutz has achieved her own dizzying, contemporary point of view. She cites an affinity with Dutch still-life painters of excess and opulence, yet has no kinship with their moralistic portents over the futilities of earthly pleasures. A true painter's painter, political caveats elude her. Her content involves the viewer on a sensual level, beckoning varying associations, without social commentary. ▲

JAN LHORMER is an oil painter, art professor, and arts writer living in Falmouth, Massachusetts. Her work is included in Deborah Forman's newly released book, *Contemporary Cape Cod Artists: On Abstraction*, which also features the art of Sarah Lutz. For more information, go to www.janlhormer.com.

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Ballpark Figures

BASEBALL IN THE WORLDS OF SHARON HORVATH

By William Corbett

SHARON HORVATH was born in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1958, too late for the great Cleveland Indians baseball teams of the early 1950s, too late for their strikingly named pitching staff of Bob Lemon, Mike "The Bear" Garcia, Early Wynn, and Herb Score. By the time Horvath learned to play baseball, the Indians were a seventh-place team led by Luis Tiant and "Sudden" Sam McDowell. Not that Horvath cared: she loved the game and not the sport. Her artist parents followed the Indians on TV (dad) and radio (mom), but her interest stayed within the diamonds on which she played. And then she grew out of Little League and her glove disappeared into a closet.

Throughout her years in art school in New York, Philadelphia, and Rome, and in her various studios as she began her career as a painter, Horvath paid scant attention to baseball. In 1994, her son, Paulus, was born, and in 2001 Horvath and he became permanent New York City residents—in Ridgewood, Queens, and in sight of a baseball field. That summer, Paulus began to play Little League ball. Horvath's father had taught her to

throw and now she taught her son. Paulus played right field, where more birds landed than baseballs. Watching his games, Horvath became transfixed by the baseball diamond, the geometry of the field, the infield bases and base paths, home plate, and the page-fence backstop.

Who knows what compels an artist to draw a particular form. The circuitry that coordinates eye with hand clicked in for Horvath and she began

to draw baseball fields. She did this in pencil on cheap paper, then colored over the pencil lines. To some drawings, she added a row of birds in the outfield, resembling a drawing of the field made by Paulus. By now, Horvath has drawn baseball fields countless times. I am looking at one of her roughly six-inch-square fields—she has stacks of these drawings—with the field and bleacher seats in red and black. She makes these drawings as if taking grounders or hitting in batting practice.

In a 2005 catalogue statement, Horvath wrote, “A baseball field suggests an idealized schema and spreads itself out in a verdant map of the female body.” In Horvath’s drawings, I see a shield, a nest, and an open catcher’s mitt. Her field is a self-contained world where anything is possible. The fans know that the major-league baseball game they are watching is connected by statistics to every other major-league game. They also know that every game is different in measurable ways, open to what Horvath calls in her statement the “precariousness of magic,” and to what the New York Mets’ first manager, Casey Stengel, called the “intangibles.” As Stengel repeatedly urged reporters, “You can look it up.”

At some point, baseball fields began to appear in Horvath’s paintings, most prominently in her 2005 show at Victoria Munroe Fine Art gallery. Here, she united the baseball field with a bed based on an ancient Roman bed she had seen at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. She saw this as a way to integrate two forms, the public and the private.

By this time she had become a New York Mets fan. She loved listening to the Mets’ announcer Bob Murphy, who called the first Mets game in

1962 and his last in 2003. Horvath listened to him while she painted. Since catcher is her favorite position, Mets catcher Mike Piazza became her favorite player. She began to take in Mets games at Shea Stadium, and she clipped photos from New York daily newspapers of views of the stadium, plays on the field, and shots of players. She put these in drawers in her studio, where they mixed with other found images and old drawings to create a compost for future work. Since nothing is arranged, every time Horvath looks for an image she has to shuffle through the mess of paper, causing her to make new and unexpected connections.

The collaged elements in her recent *Cosmicomics* exhibition of paintings and scrolls at Lori Bookstein Fine Art—named after the Italo Calvino novel—came from these drawers. Horvath has worked intermittently with collage since the 1990s. In her *Rome Series* show of 1998 at Tibor de Nagy Gallery, she collaged maps and details from her own drawings, putting

in motion the forming of a world or cosmos. In her recent work, the cosmos, several of them, are fully formed. The ballparks and player details are planets on their own. Horvath describes them as “containing meaning like a basket.” They represent the human universe seen from afar, seen as the astronauts saw the Great Wall of China from outer space.

For Horvath, baseball fields and parks are human scale, unlike football fields, which are used as measurements: “as big as ten football fields!” They are quintessentially American, and the rituals players and fans participate in at games are private and public, connecting to the deep past and the here and now as a shortstop turns two. As the baseball images focus the viewer’s attention in Horvath’s expanding worlds they—her words—“let in real visual life!” My eye falls into these fields like a high fly ball into Willie Mays’s glove when he made a basket catch and personal associations begin to play out. Since baseball isn’t ruled by the clock, who knows how many ways Horvath will find to put the ball in play, round the bases, and head toward home. ▴

WILLIAM CORBETT is a poet who lives in Brooklyn, New York. He directs the small press Pressed Wafer and is writing a book on the painter Stuart Williams. There will be more on baseball in the work of Sharon Horvath in Corbett’s book The Worlds of Sharon Horvath to be published by Pressed Wafer and Lori Bookstein Fine Art in November 2015.

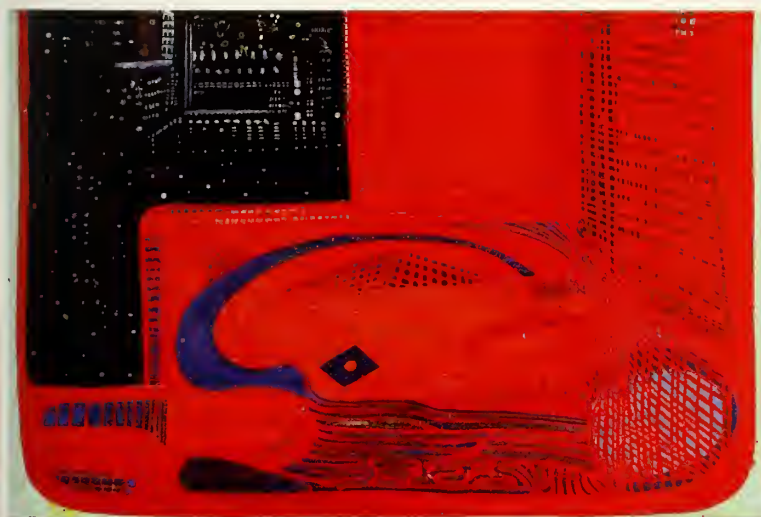


(above) *At Daybreak*, 2010–14, pigment, ink, and polymer on paper on canvas, 60 by 77¼ inches

(below) *Red Planet*, 2009, pigment and polymer on canvas, 24 by 36 inches

(opposite page) *White Night*, 2012, pigment, ink, and paper on canvas, 45 by 46 inches

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Landscapes of Love

SIDEO FROMBOLUTI AND NORA SPEYER'S ART-FILLED NATURE

By Donald Kuspit

This essay is adapted from a longer version published by the Provincetown Art Association and Museum in its catalogue for the exhibition this summer, A Shared Life in Art: Nora Speyer and Sideo Fromboluti, curated by Mary Abell, PhD, in collaboration with Nora and Sideo's children, Iona and Chris.

REVIEWING THE PARIS "Salon of 1859," Edmond and Jules de Goncourt declared, "Landscape is the victor of modern art," adding that "it is the pride of nineteenth-century painting." It was a defensive response to new social realities, to modernity itself, epitomized by the industrialization of society, threatening the death of nature, and, more insidiously, the death of man by depriving him of nature. The new tradition of landscape painting was a lifesaving response to the misery the Industrial Revolution left in its wake, an artistic remedy for the human suffering caused by the inhuman treatment of nature.

The Goncourt brothers are describing the birth of what has come to be called the *therapeutic landscape*, a reaction formation to the unhealthy urban environment of modernity, using human beings as well as nature for its own indifferent ends. The humanizing consolation afforded by untouched nature, its inherent beauty made manifest by exquisite art, becomes the reparative antidote to poisonous entrapment in ugly, dehumanizing modern cities, with their dependence on technology. It is a new kind of return to nature—a return to nature through the proxy of art, when there seems no place for nature in society.

The landscape paintings of Sideo Fromboluti and Nora Speyer belong to this great tradition of landscape painting, adding to it a passion born of their love. Living together and married for many years, their closeness to nature reflects their closeness to each other. They are as inseparable as the flowers pictured in Speyer's *Glorious Daisies and Roses in the Forest* (no date), and the pink and blue flowers floating serenely together in unperturbed water—a picture of sublime harmony, earthly nature become heavenly space—in Fromboluti's grand triptych (untitled and undated). Recall that pink is proverbially a female color, blue a male color, the union of the opposites suggesting a sexual paradise. Certainly, Fromboluti's masterpiece is highly charged erotically.

Like the Parisians who fled the stone prison that Paris had become—it had just been modernized by the Baron Haussmann, who replaced the intimate streets and small houses of the old city with the broad avenues and apartment buildings of the new city—for the nature beyond the city, so the New Yorkers Fromboluti and Speyer fled the inhospitable prison that the city was becoming, as more and more and larger and larger skyscrapers and apartment complexes were being built, their sheer size making people feel unconsciously small and less than human, for the nature beyond the inhospitable city. Far beyond it—initially in Woodstock, then on Martha's Vineyard, and, finally, to a house they built in the Wellfleet woods, near Higgins Pond, on Cape Cod. It was there that their art flourished, nourished by nature as well as their love. It had at last found its true home: nature was their love nest, as it were, or at least a *hortus conclusus* in which they could be true to themselves and each other.

Robert Motherwell, a member of Long Point, a cooperative gallery in Provincetown (in existence from 1977 to 1998), to which Fromboluti and Speyer as well as Motherwell belonged, once said, "One of the reasons I'm



a modern artist, I'm sure, is that in a way, I'm a very deeply alienated person." What Motherwell and the others, including Fromboluti and Speyer and the seventeen other Long Point artists, were alienated from was the Big Business City, epitomized by New York, the commercial center of the art world. They were not only alienated, but were in the paradoxical position of being economically dependent on the city from which they were alienated. The Long Point artists had a strong sense of community, felt personally connected to each other, developed a camaraderie impossible in the larger impersonal contractual society, felt authentically themselves in each other's presence. "We have a wonderful group, a marvelous group of people here," Fromboluti wrote. "We're very fond of each other. We're close in age and we've all gone through the same history and struggle. We understand each other perfectly."

For Fromboluti and Speyer to show the truth of nature was to tell the psychological truth about themselves. For them to organically connect with nature was to organically connect to each other. They had a clear-eyed cognitive respect for the otherness of nature, however deeply they identified with it, suggesting they never separated from it, as they never did from each other.

Two grand traditions of landscape painting began in the nineteenth century: the French, stretching from Corot and the Barbizon School through Impressionism to Cézanne; and the Germanic, beginning with Caspar David Friedrich, continuing in Ferdinand Hodler, and climaxing in German Expressionist landscape painting, particularly in Karl Schmidt-Rottluff's richly colored panoramic landscapes and Emil Nolde's intimate close-ups of colorful flowers. The two traditions are grounded in radically different views of nature, leading to different ways of representing it. The French are more perceptual, concerned with accurately rendering the observed facts of nature, the Germans more conceptual, concerned with fathoming and conveying the meaning of nature. The French were interested in vision; the Germans were visionaries, indeed, mystics.



I will argue that, in their different ways, Fromboluti and Speyer idiosyncratically mix and merge the “classical” French attitude and the romantic German attitude to nature. Thus, the three trees in a pastel (untitled and undated) of Fromboluti’s seem to allude directly to Monet’s *Poplars*, 1891. Fromboluti’s *Rain on Patience Brook*, 1984, with its five trees, has its precedent in Monet’s *Poplars on the River Epte*, 1891. The trees are different, but the theme—a group of trees by running water—is the same. Again and again, Monet and Fromboluti paint trees in forests or as lonely personages. Thus, we have Monet’s *Wood Lane*, 1893, and *Willows at Sunset*, 1894, and Fromboluti’s three shadowy trees in the flickering sun, the two gesture-like trees flanking a *Sailboat on Higgins Pond*, 1993, and the three trees in the central panel of his “floating” triptych—a work indebted to Monet’s water-lily murals.

Monet’s pictures tend to be sunny, but the misty gray in Fromboluti’s *Rain on Patience Brook* brings to mind the atmospheric gray in Monet’s rendering of Rouen Cathedral at dusk. Like Monet, Fromboluti is an acute observer of nature; the less clear it seems, the more clear-eyed he becomes. He responds to its subtlety with his own subtle perception. It is as though he is sharpening his eyes on the whetstone of its wondrous nuances. Nature may be protean, but Fromboluti is able to grab it and hold it fast. Like Monet, he apotheosizes “eureka” moments of perception. The incisive contours of his shadowy trees, the fragile delicacy of his atmosphere, with its ever-changing light, are all rendered with patient respect for their particularity, sensitive painstaking devotion to their sheer givenness, their being unmistakably here and now.

I have tried to show Fromboluti’s French side—his “classical” concern with unadulterated (un-theorized) perception, straightforward vision however unstraightforward nature may seem—so where is his German romantic side? It is evident in the raw colors in *Rooster on Paint Table*, 2005—the rooster is a symbol of Fromboluti, crowing like a proud rooster to wake us up to art and nature—and, more subtly, in the eccentrically twisted branch hovering in isolation above a pond of lily pads. That tensely eloquent branch is

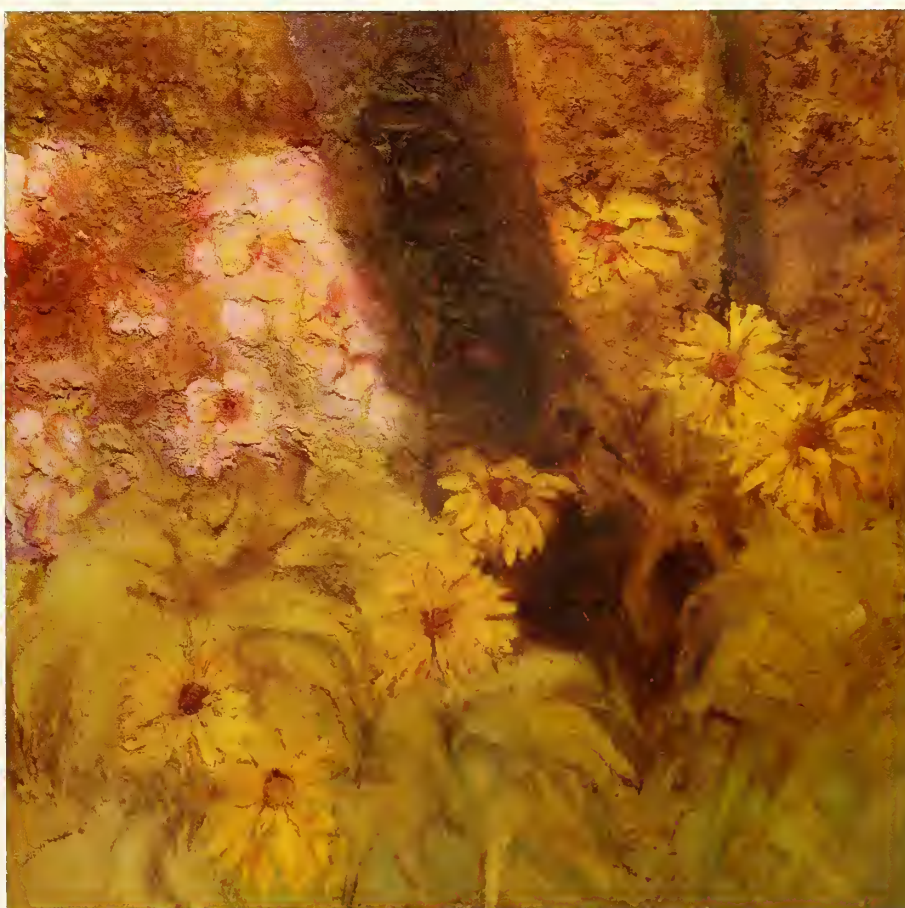
in effect an Abstract Expressionistic gesture. The abrupt contrast between the luminous yellow of the sky and the pitch-black shore is romantically abstract. Spirit and nature are at odds, yet one.

Indeed, the more abstract Fromboluti’s works become the more visionary they become, however much they remain images of a scene he has perceived. A drawing of thin reeds—which are seemingly evaporating, dematerializing in a greenish pond crossed by bands of cloud-like light of different lengths (the birds that hover around them seem like angels)—is an abstract impression of nature rather than a straightforward description of it. In another wonderful pastel, Fromboluti pares the scene to its elemental details. The tension between the vast expanse of the water, taking up more than half the picture, and the marshes and hills on its shores, is excruciating. There is a brooding energy to this work, suggesting that this natural place is the haunt of a spirit.

Speyer’s wildflowers—*Glorious Daisies and Roses in the Forest*, already mentioned; *Daisies*, 1968; *Patio VI*, 1989; *Patio #9*, 1992; *Two Flower Vases*, also 1992—are deliciously romantic. Their flamboyant detail is rendered with luxurious precision, suggesting they are odalisques in disguises. Their colors are loud and vibrant, their shapes meticulously correct however odd. They are blasts of paint worthy of Van Gogh, yet less harshly painted. One might say they are romantically Impressionistic, their Impressionistic vividness acknowledging their plein-air character, the atmospheric moment of spontaneous, concentrated perception. Fromboluti seems more interested in the trees in the forest than in the flowers; Speyer is completely absorbed—ecstatically taken—with the flowers. No phallic trees for her; she is all woman, luxuriating in her femininity, surrounded by an abundance of fiery flowers, their radiance

conveying its indomitable power, the eternal feminine’s regal presence.

But there is another side to Speyer’s femininity—a nightmarish side, as *Nightmare 1* (no date) makes clear. It is work worthy of Fuseli’s *Nightmare*, 1781, which also shows a woman unable to awaken from a frightening



(above) Nora Speyer, *Glorious Daisies and Roses in the Forest*, (no date), oil on canvas, 50 by 50 inches
(top) Sideo Fromboluti, *Sailboat on Higgins Pond*, 1993, oil on canvas, 40 by 40 inches
(opposite page) Nora Speyer and Sideo Fromboluti in 1976 PHOTO BY CHRISTOPHER FROMBOLUTI

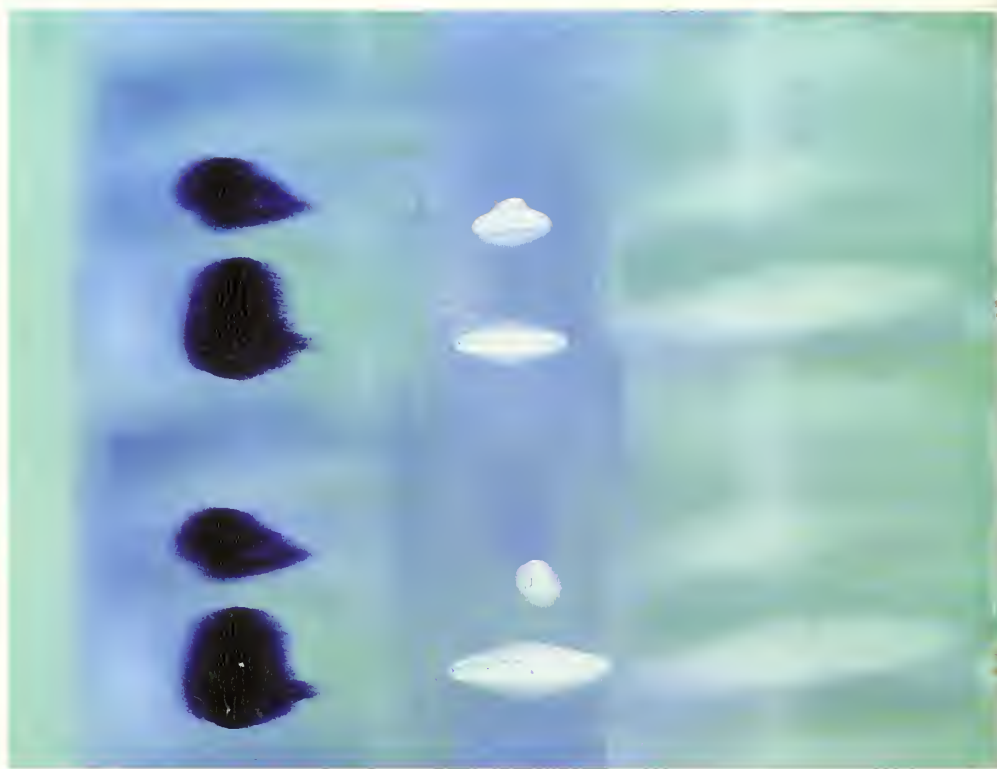
dream, a woman possessed by a devil, traditionally taking bizarre animal form, as Speyer's absurd creature does. Speyer's morbidly mysterious monster has an uncanny resemblance to Fuseli's, suggesting she knew her art history. Speyer's extraordinary *Death and the Maiden* series has its precedent in Hans Baldung-Grien's *Death and the Maiden* series, suggesting the truth of the psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott's idea that genuine originality is only possible on the basis of knowledge of tradition.

Paradoxically, it is in her romantic paintings, with their traditional, mythic themes—*Adam and Eve with Snake*, 1976, is another one (they're asleep, as though after coitus, bathed in golden light, as the lurid snake hovers above them, like an intrusive, sinister, disruptive grand gesture)—that Speyer shows her French precision, her attention to detail, conveyed through nuanced line, completely at odds with the romantic colors of her flower paintings. Her drawings of *Adolescents*, two (female?) figures, and *Girl with Slip* (none dated), are all line and no color. The first two drawings are imaginatively and eccentrically abstract, whereas the *Girl with Slip* is realistic; the characters and emotions of the figures are different, but what stands out is the deft linearity of the drawings, the sense of a hand sure of its movements, conveyed by the swiftness, boldness, and calculated difference between the lines that form the image. Speyer's dream women suffer emotionally, but their bodies are composed of what Blake called the lineaments of satisfied desire.

I suggest that Speyer treats the female body as though it were a mysterious landscape, the mystery of nature and of woman magically fusing in its form. Sometimes the female dryad has a body blurred into atmospheric abstraction, like the maiden in *Death and the Maiden IX*, 2004. Speyer's works tend to be multilayered with unconscious meanings. Thus, the relationship of pursuing Death and resistant Maiden reflects that of pursuing Apollo and resistant Daphne. The psychosexual implications of Speyer's works seem transparent: there is something daemonic about her women, however beautiful they may be. They are passionate yet disturbed. After all, the maiden dreams of the devil and death: they are aspects of her psyche, hallucinatory projections of her unconscious feelings about herself, her conflict within herself.

Speyer's art is split between the positive and the negative, the conscious and the unconscious—the beautiful sunny flowers she sees with the loving eyes of consciousness and the haunted woman threatened by ugly feelings she sees with the uncanny eyes of her unconscious—while Fromboluti's art is more single-mindedly positive, that is, more completely an art of consciousness. One might say he is more conscious of nature than of himself while Speyer is as conscious of herself as she is of nature. ▲

DONALD KUSPIT is an American art critic, poet, and distinguished professor emeritus of art history and philosophy at the State University of New York at Stony Brook and former professor of art history at the School of Visual Arts.



Untitled, 2014, oil on panel, 9 by 12 inches

Vivian Bower

LIMITATION IS HER SALVATION

By Christopher Busa

VIVIAN BOWER is an artist who has been associated with Provincetown for over three decades. Her formative experience was looking out on the bay from her East End property, which is right on the harbor shoreline. She gazed at the expanse of sky and sea, moved by the rich variety of blues, and was especially fascinated by the gentle “capillary” waves that brushed calm water, making whorls like fingerprints on the glassy surface, and allowing the breeze to gain a better grip. She translated these ephemeral atmospheric details of transparency and reflection into her work with incised lines made with the sharpened point of a wooden stick. The bigger waves, the cloud formations, the piling on, the mounting of one billowing shape upon another, the motion of swirling winds—all of these details culminated in Bower's desire to utilize pastels and clay to simulate her emotional impressions. She found a way—utterly abstract, yet exactly evocative of felt experience. Tiny details are manifest in expanded space, and I mention this element of scale to suggest how she compresses immensity—the emotional compression of something too vast to comprehend—into the very small format of her recent two by three inch oil paintings.

Uniquely her own, these small paintings came about as a result of a bike accident. “Neither bees nor bats nor birds threw me from my bike,” Bower explained. “I just passed out during a major bike ride on the occasion of my seventieth birthday. I had the intention of doing seventy miles on that day. At sixty-eight years old, I rode sixty miles; at

sixty-nine, I did sixty-nine miles. So I was planning to do seventy. Somewhere at mile forty-two, I passed out. I was riding with nothing in my way. Perhaps I hadn't eaten enough or had enough to drink. I went down, shocked, breaking my collarbone. I lost function in my right arm. I didn't want to learn to use my left arm. In my studio,

I had a couple of these small panels, started to work on them, and a friend came in and said they were wonderful. That was all the encouragement I needed to realize that this was as much as I could do. The compass of two by three inches was the extent of my range of movement."

The limitation became her salvation. About eighteen months earlier, she had ceased working in pastel. Now she decided to paint with oil, even though she hadn't studied how to use the medium. In all her mediums, Bower is self-taught, independent in her resolute nature, determined to find her own way. She knew she would have to go through a difficult period of self-discovery. As she developed her facility in painting in this small format, she was delighted to encounter "a personal language: I believe in mark-making, myth-making, magic-making." She believes line guides her to vistas more vital than color, and twenty years of living by the bay made her realize how the landscape had become a deep influence on her work. Unconsciously, she had absorbed the light, the marks, the mystery—"that is all in my work without being a direct or conscious

effort to replicate. Yes, it feels infused with my personal experience."

Earlier, in 1994 and 1995, Bower produced another body of work, radically different, which addressed the Rwanda Genocide. That work was exhibited at the Florida Holocaust Museum, receiving quite a bit of attention, with praise in articles written by Robert Morgan and April Kingsley. Bower had cringed while reading newspaper accounts of the mass slaughter of more than half a million Rwandan people—the Tutsi and some of the more moderate Hutu—by the members of the Hutu majority and Hutu extremists. The images were terrifying, with bulldozers scooping out enormous tracts for mass graves. Bower collaged raw documentary materials—newspaper clippings, photographs, repeating printed words like *mutilation, mutilation, mutilation*, repeating grainy images of tombstones stacked one row upon another, much in the early manner of her piled clouds, and offering a searing connection between the Rwanda images and the beautiful tranquility of her landscapes, as if collective humanity were released into atmospheric forms. *Rwanda Series #81* shows the ghostly forms of white bodies rising like curling smoke from interment in the earth, a kind of ascension of collective humanity, rather than any single individual. Bower has combined, most movingly, the atrocity into a general human horror.

Her shift from the nonpolitical aspect of landscape toward intensely amplified anger, however continuous, took her by surprise: "The first drawing I did that related to the genocide was when I was on my deck by the bay, making another landscape—but I had been reading about the genocide and seen pictures in a magazine, which had penetrated. Out of nowhere, I started making falling, red stick figures. For the next two and a half years, that was the subject of my work; over 250 images, and I couldn't stop. I was consumed in a way I will never completely understand. I needed some means of responding, a period of bearing witness—a need to look at this violence, not for understanding, but so as not to turn away."

Her mention of stick figures calls to mind the sharp, incisive lines etched in her landscapes, indicating wave patterns. To say these figures were "falling," rather like rain from the sky or tears running down a face, delineates the direction of quasi-invisible forces, akin to the random movement of wind. Suddenly, instead of being natural forces, these lines of force strike a viewer as a way of connecting nature with humanity, bringing out emotions in her landscape vocabulary that became more overtly expressed in her Rwanda work.

Bower explained that she was responding to the violence: "As you know, my work up until that moment had nothing to do with violence. It wasn't showing nature in any violent way. It shocked me. I think I was



Untitled, 2013, oil on panel, 2 by 3 inches

responding to a situation where we could all sit down at dinner and, if the television was on, there were these otherworldly images of Rwanda. Or, if you opened a magazine, right next to the most gruesome images, there was a lipstick ad. I think that at the same moment that there was beauty in ordinary life, simultaneously, there was this horrific event. Those two events met, became joined, and I needed to find a response."

Her method suggests that she needed a shield or a screen to access something more deeply personal. Freud spoke of screen memories that stood between trauma and a mediated recollection. The initial trauma can be so great that a veil is required to approach it. At the same time, one may achieve a strict tunnel vision that eliminates a larger context. In Bower's work, we see this powerful crystallization of creativity in her response to trauma and conflict. Perhaps that's why one becomes an artist: one is driven to achieve resolution within deeply personal clashes. With Bower's sharp contrasts of light and dark, one can find a glimpse in the shadows of some kind of beauty.


After several years of immersion in the Rwandan work, Bower returned to depictions of the natural landscape of the Lower Cape, inspired by the horizon on the bay and then the trees of her new home in Truro: "If there is background to this choice I made, it's invisible to me. I think I asked myself questions, but when it was over, it was over. There was a day I walked into the studio and outlined my hand on a lot of the images I had produced. They were strewn all over the walls. I knew I had touched this, and then I was pushing it away. That was it. I made handprints on every single image I had. I started drawing trees, going right back into the landscape. The transition was quick. When I stopped drawing the sea and sky and clouds, I stopped because the impulse was exhausted. Then when I moved from the bay to the woods of Truro, I began drawing the trees.

"As an artist, I am inward. Living in Provincetown on the bay, the sense of vacationers outside my door was noise, an irritation. In Truro, it's extremely quiet and private. Solitude is important for my work. I work every day. I start the day with a meditation practice. I'm devoted to exercise and take long bike rides or go to the gym. Then I get to work, or rather I enter the studio and do not necessarily get to work—there is always a transition, checking the e-mail, checking the newspaper. But then I devote



Rwanda Series #81, 1995, pastel and xerox, 31½ by 12½ inches

my hours to my work. By four thirty or five, I like to take a walk or sit by the ocean and read.”

In works both tranquil and disturbing, Bower doesn't use a paintbrush, applying paint in layers with her fingers, a palette knife, or rollers that create a blended, Rothko-like blending of boundaries. In one work illustrated here, we see the repetition of cloud-like shapes, with four black shapes on the left, four white ones in the center, and, on the right, cloud-like streaking, as if swept by invisible wind. These three parts have individual identity, yet stream together in a kind of kinship. I've never seen anyone paint like Bower. How pleasing to witness the work of an artist who is so uniquely herself. 

CHRISTOPHER BUSA is editor of Provincetown Arts.

Touching the Beach

By Jay Critchley

These two excerpts are from Jay Critchley's fictional memoir in progress, Uncle Jay, and offer insight into the artist's formative years. His first solo museum show, Jay Critchley Incorporated, was recently held at the Provincetown Art Association and Museum (PAAM), with a catalogue published by Provincetown Arts Press (available at www.provincetownarts.org and at PAAM).

PEOPLE SETTLE IN Provincetown for many reasons. For me, it starts with the sand. I've always loved to collect things, and I love to cover them up. It all began while I was growing up, spending summers with my family on an isolated island in Long Island Sound, East Lyme, Connecticut—staking my claim to something sacred, the beach. But my home basement was just as sacred, where I brought my gathered treasures from the island into this male cave I shared with my father. But the damp and flood-prone basement also provided shelter for my mother's accumulation of overstocked household merchandise—sale items, of course.

FROM JAY'S JOURNAL

TOUCHING THE BEACH

Each spring, sometime in May, my Uncle Cliff, Aunt Jerry, and cousins Paul and Tommy invited me on their first trip of the season to the Connecticut shore. I gladly interrupted my bike-riding, coin-collecting, and forced basketball or baseball games to join the journey and carry the torch to the beachhead of Huntley Island. It became my personal, dutiful mission to make landfall, to be the first to touch the island beach. I would strategically place myself at the bow of the mahogany boat and leap off into the cold water and the reassuring sand, the pure, winter-cleansed sandy beach, human footprint free. This kicked off the opening of the summerlong theater season of family dramas, delusions, and disease-free living. A small step for mankind, but a giant leap for me. It anchored my sense of being special in a family of well-managed equality. This is where those granules of sand began to work their way into my brain, work their magic on my skin and to my touch.

It's the best-kept secret—we had the finest sandy beach in the area. It was nicely tucked around the back side of Uncle Cliff's jetty project, facing the mainland to the north, a one-hundred-foot-long stretch between large, high rock formations that loomed over the beach like weathered sphinxes. This natural layout slowed the ingoing and outgoing tides, sifting out the larger grains and stones, depositing the ever-so-fine granules of off-white sand. These ever-changing waters deposited billions of grains of the softest, smoothest sand anywhere around. A handful had the feeling of fine sugar that flowed through your fingers like tomato soup or whole-wheat flour, but heavier. Unlike much beach sand in Long Island Sound, which can be brushed off, Huntley Island sand stuck like baby powder, especially attuned to salt

water on skin. Exhibiting all shades of white, its paint-like quality always required another stab of the feet into the water or a quick dunk and a brushing to rinse off.

Then you had to contend with dry, powdery, salty skin—on a nice day, an hour later, sometimes the next day. There was an alternative for those determined to fight the course of nature, a douse of ice-cold well water. If one were fortunate, and one seldom was, except when the girls planned to wash their hair, you could plan ahead and fill several plastic buckets of water and warm them up in the sun. Assuming no one else decided to use one or kicked them over, you could have yourself a nice, selfish, warm rinsing while everyone else enviously watched. At one point Uncle Cliff built his waterworks project, complete with a concrete water tank up on high ground near the house, and an outdoor shower on the edge of the stone wall and “terrace” we all built. But the water was still ice cold.


For me, the beach was sacred ground. Not only did the mysteries of the tides continuously surprise me—depositing the gifts of seaweed, horseshoe crabs, green crabs, mummy chubs, and UFOs, unidentified floating objects—but also, ironically, it became a place of conquest, of marking territory, like an animal. Like the astronauts who placed the first flag on the moon, I was the first to touch the beach in the spring for many years. It was a secret pact I made with myself, something unspoken, like avoiding the lines on sidewalks or walking in a choreographed movement based on the design or layout of a kitchen floor, a gymnasium, or a hotel lobby.

FROM JAY'S DIARY, 1995

The cellar in my house growing up at 78 Vernon Street was cool, dark, and damp. And it smelled of dead animals—muskrats, beaver, mink, and



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fox—which my father caught trapping, and then gutted and skinned in the basement and hung from the wooden rafters to dry.

After every rainstorm, the concrete floor and the stone walls flooded, and I, being the oldest boy, would be selected to go down and assess the damage. The result: Bobbing for Bargains, a mirage of floating plastic bottles of bleach, rolls of plastic almost-sealed paper towels and toilet paper and napkins, dish soap and laundry detergent, sometimes in bloated cardboard boxes. All the result of my mother's coupon clipping, S&H Green Stamp collecting, and hidden insecurity, not about her social status or family appearance quotient, but about her preparedness training, instilled in her by her mother, a maidservant to a rich English family in London, after fleeing the remnants of The Great Hunger in Ireland. And there were plastic and wooden toys like baseball bats and balls, beach balls, tennis balls, a basketball, tractors and hula hoops, a pogo stick, whiffle balls, and those white foam-like Christmas balls made into snowmen and ornaments, and Santa Clauses pierced with sequins and zigzag red hem ribbon and plastic holly and berries.

Plenty of stuff sank, or stayed put. Wooden chairs in various states of disrepair, an ancient wooden workbench so heavy and austere that it became the centerpiece of the dark room. It was piled high with periodic offerings of discounted white, shiny packages, crowned by garden implements, never-used tools, creating a changing decorative altar to excessive bargains. Spiderwebbed objects and rings on the cellar walls attested to the layers of the history of bargains and the cycles of shopping necessities. After years of loss and grieving, we put in a water pump, dug a hole through the concrete floor to install it, and occasionally got it working.

But it was the animal smell that defined the space, wafting up to the first floor of the house, where my mother had her untouchable living room with all the finest furniture, many wedding gifts—high-backed stuffed chairs, drapes, a fake Persian rug, and lots of knickknacks, including two exquisite Hummels of the Blessed Virgin Mary, one a long tall elegant figure of blue gown and delicate face and hands. Always those delicate hands folded perfectly together under her bosom, unrestrained. And the other Madonna of more earthy stature, seated, cloak spread out at the base with the Christ child on her knee. This frozen tableau of a room remained unchanged over fifty years, with the exception of the circular brass coffee table with the tripartite wooden stand brought back from Japan by my sister Mary, which I regularly glued together after numerous accidents. It sits directly over my dad's basement skinning and pelting operation.

Funny thing about my dad—he could expertly trap and skin and board a pelt, correctly identify the glorious colors of raised mink fur, ski, play baseball and tennis, and bowl, but I never saw him with a hammer in his hand, and I know I never saw him with his head under the hood of a car. And my mother had an aversion to animals. I guess she was too close to the family farm in Limerick, Ireland, one generation removed, where chickens hung out on the kitchen's dirt floor and were part of the family. There it might have been survival and sustenance; here the symbiotic relationship consisted of allowing only dead animals into the house. No pets, never a live chicken.

For my dad it was a genteel blood sport. There was something refined, American-style refined, about going into the woods and swamps with your bag of metal leghold traps and a ham sandwich. It was an art and a meditation. Accompanying him on an expedition into the wilderness was a journey into Jungian depths where man and animal spirits spoke the same language. The senses become heightened after leaving the roadside smells of petroleum and asphalt and rubber behind. Setting a trap required intimate knowledge and observation of texture, form, wind, color, and light. At water's edge, a close examination might reveal a slight rubbing of the grasses, a hardened surface, a broken twig, all suggestions of an animal passageway. Once a spot was chosen, the trap would be staked, tested by opening, setting, and springing, and then set in the intuitively precise location where the animal would step, just below the water's surface.

There was no visible delight on my father's face when we came upon a muskrat that had chewed its own leg down to the bone to escape the trap's teeth, and had died in the process. The surrounding ground was dug up and messy. The dried blood anointed the green grasses, leaves, and dirt, creating a spectrum of color in the patched sunlight.

One of the two or three times I was aware of my father's political activism involved his opposition to anti-trapping legislation promoted by



Critchley on Huntley Island, building castles in the sand, 1956
(below) *The Pieta*, 1986, fish skin and mixed media, 11 by 10 by 5 inches

animal-rights advocate Cleveland Amory, filed to outlaw leghold traps in Connecticut. On another occasion in the early '70s, he rode a bus all night to attend an antiabortion rally in the nation's capital. We could also classify as "political" his trip to the shrine of Our Lady of Fatima in Portugal—his first trip to Europe, at age seventy—where he did the full outdoor stations of the cross on his knees on a gravel path.

I don't recall ever seeing any one of my six sisters in the cellar. It was a man's world. Descending into the basement was an escape into a dimly lit underworld, with only one tiny, dirty window at three ends of the cross-shaped house. The cellar doors were crooked and rotting in place and never fully closed properly. The outside cellar doors were ancient, structurally delicate, and minimally functional.

The basement was my safe zone where I was left alone to build my dreams—Popsicle-stick models of idealized suburban homes, futuristic car designs for General Motors youth auto model competitions, and the latest *Popular Mechanics* projects, thanks to Grandma Critchley's subscription, which assured her that her grandson had what every American boy needed to grow up to be a productive and useful man.

Popsicle sticks were the first things I collected, off the street that is. I also began collecting US coins in the fourth grade, bothering everyone I dared ask to unload his or her pockets for my perusal. Kimmy, son of the Judge of Probate, a close family friend, became my Mentor of Coinage, bringing me into the coin and jewelry shops of bustling downtown



Bristol before the entire city center was leveled for urban renewal. It was replaced by parking lots and shopping malls. Before antilittering was de rigueur and soda pop cans became king, double-stick Popsicles and single-stick Creamsicles were the junk food of the 1950s, and the purple and red and orange and pink, smooth, stained tan wood throwaway sticks littered the neighborhood streets. My self-assigned job was to gather this consumer detritus as raw material for my creations—designing dream houses, suburban ranches, sculpture and fantasy dwellings, all with Elmer's glue. This was good old-fashioned recycling—returning Coke bottles, scratches and all, to be reused, not melted or smelted down into unneeded trinkets or silly souvenirs.

Magic sticks. Saliva soaked, poking in and out of wanton mouths, deep into the throat, then tightened lips would suck the artificially flavored juices out of the ice and break off the loosened end as the Popsicle was withdrawn. Inserted again, after a dose of warm melting air, to be jammed into the roof of the mouth and pressed onto the quivering taste buds of the fleshy tongue. These wooden sticks were my cache, and the neighborhood streets, playgrounds, and ball fields became my frontier. On my bicycle, with satchel on my back, I sampled, extracted, and gathered raw materials—a mid-American century expedition collecting cultural and ceremonial artifacts from the natives. I brought these indigenous materials into my subterranean laboratory for observation, dissection, categorization, and, ultimately, refashioning, ever mindful of where these slender objects had come from, where they had been, and where they might be going.

Eight feet above ground in the garage loft was another staked-out space. A wooden ladder led up to the unfinished peaked-roof loft with a large open-air window that overlooked the backyard and the huge Cortland apple tree. The two-car garage was a freestanding structure with two large double wooden doors that, of course, never fully closed. One bay was reserved for the one family car, which could be squeezed in if the driver was careful and patient. The other bay was a constantly changing array of skis, furniture, boxes of secondhand clothes scrutinized and rejected by the girls, or boxes awaiting their discernment. Getting up into the loft required ingenuity, and often the help of a friend—never a helping sibling—but once attained offered a nearly stand-up space for solitude and a box seat to view the continuous family performances in the yard. ▲

JAY CRITCHLEY is a conceptual and multimedia artist and activist whose work has traversed the globe, showing across the United States and in Argentina, Japan, England, Spain, France, Holland, Germany, and Columbia. His patriotic Old Glory Condoms won a controversial trademark from the United States, and he received an HBO award for his movie, Toilet Treatments, at the Provincetown Film Festival. He has taught at the Museum School of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and has had residencies at Harvard University; AS220 in Providence; Williams College; Real Art Ways in Hartford, Milepost 5 in Portland, Oregon; Harvestworks, New York City; Fundación Valparaíso, Almería, Spain; and CAC, Marnay-sur-Seine, France.

Mimi Gross

RAPT RAPPORT, SINCERE OBSERVATION, AND FAMILY TRADITION

By Christopher Busa

IN CELEBRATING THE work of artist Mimi Gross, I found myself naturally turning to her family history, especially in the work of her artist parents, Chaim and Renee Gross. Their contribution, as well as Gross's, has enriched and influenced the Outer Cape community and its artists for over sixty years.

It all began in 1921, when Chaim Gross arrived in New York, a seventeen-year-old refugee from war-torn Eastern Europe. His only language was the Yiddish spoken in a small village deep in the forests of the Carpathian Mountains, where his father was a lumber merchant, surveying large tracts of birch, pine, and fir trees. In the evenings, he mingled with the peasant families huddled around a roaring wood fire, the adults whittling cooking spoons for the kitchen or fashioning toys for the children. Here, the future sculptor inhaled the sharp scent of freshly felled timber and found his lifelong passion for direct carving in hard woods or soft stone. Once a year, a circus came to town, and here the sculptor found his subject in the performances of acrobats.

Assisted by an older brother, Naftoli, a poet who had escaped to America before the war broke out, Gross enrolled at the Educational Alliance Art School on New York's Lower East Side. One other boy in his class spoke Yiddish, Moses Soyer—"He taught me English," Gross recalled in a memoir published in *Provincetown Arts* in 1989, two years after Moses's twin brother, Raphael, died. The Soyer family had come from Russia in 1912. Gross was treated like a son, recalling, "I was just one of them. I could come up any time and have a meal."

Mimi Gross, who was born twenty years after her father arrived in New York, grew up amid the soul-searching artists her father and mother, Renee Gross, gathered around them. These artists exchanged works with each other and built sophisticated understandings of divergent styles, not only across the prevailing isms of Modernism, but across centuries of art history. Chaim Gross bought a house in Provincetown in 1950, high on a hill in the West End, which had been the house and studio of the artist George Elmer Browne, one of the founders of the Provincetown Art Association. He also ran his own art school, along with Charles Hawthorne and other notable founders, when Provincetown was first receiving national attention as an art colony. Mimi remembers, as a young girl, sitting on the lap of Edward Hopper. When she was old enough to apply for admission to Bard College, Milton Avery wrote her reference letter.

Hans Hofmann, who also lived in the West End, was a friend of her father's, and Mimi attended some of his crits and met many Hofmann

students who would later gain fame. She absorbed the rebellious ethos of some of the second-generation Abstract Expressionists, who were driven to recover aspects of figuration that more formal abstraction spurned, even as they prized the gestural and improvisational methods of action painting. She began to mingle with the artists who showed at the innovative Sun Gallery, which opened in 1955, run by Yvonne Andersen, an artist who became a filmmaker, and Dominic Falcone, a poet. They combined their inclinations to foster work by Alex Katz, Lester Johnson, Jay Milder, Jan Müller, Robert and Mary Frank, Bill Barrell, Jim Forsberg, John Grillo, Tony Vevers, and Allan Kaprow, the inspiration behind the period's spontaneous "Happenings." Here, Mimi met her future husband, the charismatic, fiery-haired "Red" Grooms, marveling at the eccentric, outlandish proportions in his large figure drawings, where legs of exaggerated length showed the power of a man strutting.

Every year, Andersen and Falcone wintered in different cities—in San Francisco, where they met the City Lights poets centered around Lawrence Ferlinghetti, who came to read in Provincetown at the Sun, and in New York, where they met members of the artist-run Hansa Gallery, some of whom they incorporated into their own summer roster. In the summer of 1961, after the Sun closed, Mimi Gross and Red Grooms, whom she had married by this time, spent the summer traveling through Northern Italy in a horse-drawn cart with three other people. Meandering through the byways of the countryside, they stopped to give puppet shows, which taught



Gross much about interaction with an immediate audience.

Even though she's a loner in her studio, Gross is very active with installations, performances, and presentations. To date, she has done over twenty collaborations with the choreographer Douglas Dunn, designing sets and the dancers' costumes, which are very colorful, made of stretch fabric and shiny vinyl. As the dancers move, their forms create dynamic sculptures. Developing an impulse implicit in her father's sculpture, where figures are

often animated in their spatial relationships, Gross strives to go beyond the static three-dimensionality of sculpture, seeking to add the energy of motion. Many of her works animate landscapes—blazing beach scenes or the drifting patterns of colored clouds—by layering receding planes one behind the other and jutting forward from the wall on a skeletal armature, achieving a degree of relief of two and a half feet, her favored depth of field.

Mimi and Red were married for sixteen years and had one daughter, Saskia, named after Rembrandt's

first wife. Together, they collaborated on many public projects, including *Ruckus Manhattan* (1975–76), and animated 16 mm films, such as *Fat Feet* (1965–66), about nightmarish fires in New York, where costumed figures had their own shoes screwed into huge heavy boots fashioned by Grooms, with the idea that fat feet would make them more “earth-bound.” *Fat Feet* was inspired by the early animated films of Georges Méliès and Émile Cohl, which Mimi and Red had seen in the film collection of Joseph Cornell, assisted by Rudy Burckhardt. They had just moved into the Little Italy neighborhood, and Gross recalled, “I was busy drawing in the streets and making objects based on street life, and Red was obsessively chasing fires, fire engines, street life, he was incorporating into his work.”



(above) *Around 3 O'clock at Herring Cove Beach*, 2014, gouache or oil paint on gessoed wood, one of three 6 by 6 foot walls, figure arrangements vary, figures from 8–16 by 7–16 by 2–3 inches; (top) *Afternoon at Herring Cove Beach, Four Figures*, 2014, oil paint on wood, 24 by 47 by 8 inches

Though he was a sculptor, Chaim Gross drew constantly, responding to what he saw in daily life with the echo of his hand, a habit that became as natural as breathing, a part of his being. Likewise, Mimi never goes anywhere without her sketchbook. She loves multitudes, and is especially drawn to the inattentive faces of strangers on the subway, engaged in reading or dreaming, unaware of themselves. These unguarded moments are opportunities for what she described as “sincere observation” in a conversation she had with her friend and collaborator Charles Bernstein, a prominent poet. He and his wife, Susan Bee, often summer in Provincetown with Gross, staying at one of her houses. Bee is an artist and the coeditor of the innovative artist journal *M/E/A/N/I/N/G*. The friends share many interests, in particular a belief in how drawing is like writing. For a major show of Mimi's work in 2002 at Salander-O'Reilly Galleries in New York, *Charm of the Many*, Bernstein wrote a long essay discussing the artist's absorption with capturing her subject's unselfconscious expression. Bernstein

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also captured her creative process in a prose poem, "Seven Charms for Mimi":

Try to be as close to what you see and think at the same time. At the same time, be close to what you see and try to think as. See and think as close to the same time: try to be what you at. See as close to and think at the same time what you try to be. To be close as think, see time, to what and at the same you try. As close to the same you see time, think at, and try to be what? Try to be as close to what you think and feel at the same time.

This strikes me as the experiential flow of the creative process, not after the fact, but as it is happening. How interesting then it is to see a large charcoal drawing by Gross, *Honoring the Rescuers* (2001), showing twenty-one policemen and firemen who rushed to Ground Zero to aid the victims on September 11th. Their faces are smudged with fury and regret. Some seem to have lost their hats in the struggle; others' faces, shadowed under visors, peer into the present as if dazed by their duty. Each headshot is unique, a protrusion of protruding lights and darks exemplifying unique tonal shades



Sunset, Provincetown, 2012-13, oil on wood, 32 by 50 by 4 inches

of trauma, massed together in common effort to understand a social atrocity.

Another drawing by Gross, depicting the fury of triage as the rescuers respond, has the words DISASTER RELIEF and AMERICAN RED CROSS written in capital letters in the upper-left portion of the drawing. Bernstein, writing in his notebook at the moment of crisis depicted, scribbles, "By mistake, I just wrote Word Trade Center." They collaborated on a limited edition book about 9/11 called *Some of These Daze* with poems by Bernstein and drawings by Gross (Granary Books, 2005). Here, mistakes of the moment are revelations of our mental processes during intense occasions of rapt attention.

I asked Gross to elaborate on what inspires her to sketch. She said, "It's not formulaic, it's not a preconceived idea, but a responding to what actually happens as it happens. It's not only what happens, but what grows. I've always believed and advocated that if you draw from life and what you observe, when you want to make something up, you have it at your fingertips. You have the discipline from observation. In other words, you are not only recording reality, you are adding a faculty of feeling that accompanies the occasion. The feeling is not self-conscious, simply the habit of the doing."

This reminded me of the work of her father, who so loved the commotion of public spectacles and tried to show people in a frozen moment of motion; I wondered if his daughter had somehow taken this direction and developed it more experimentally, into film and dance, so the motion ceases to be static or frozen. She seemed to be exploring the tragedy in modes of performance, the self evolving in the expansion of time. I asked if she had ever discussed this with her father.

"A little bit," she recalled. "And you probably had the same experience with your own father [Peter Busa, a close friend of Chaim Gross]. If you think of a whole lifetime, something may be briefly said, and then briefly said years later—it accumulates in your memory and comes together. One of the things we did frequently was go together to circuses, which we both loved. Later, I was with Red—a true performer who believed in live theater. When we got together, this was a common interest."

Her father's interest in movement increased when he began to work with bronze. He discovered, after working monolithically in carving wood

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or marble, very solid, that the movement could be developed in the subject matter, if not necessarily in the forms themselves. Later, when he was able to weld sections together, it opened up his work with even more movement. I asked Gross if this transition resonated with her and perhaps influenced her own work. She responded, “Eminently, actually, and eloquently.”

This innovative sculptural work was created in tandem with a foundation that Gross’s parents established in their four-story building south of Washington Square, the Renee & Chaim Gross Foundation. Her father’s studio was on the ground floor, a dense jungle full of writhing figures carved in the hardest of exotic hardwoods, with dark sheens, slim waists, and bulbous appendages. Chaim was interested in oceanic and African art, tribal art, in which forms were passed down through generations, becoming articulated in finer and finer delineations, becoming more chiseled and sophisticated, even as modern scholars called it “primitive art.” I wanted to know which hardwoods her father favored.

“He used over eighty different hardwoods,” Gross said. “His favorite was *lignum vitae*, the hardest wood known, a velvet black with density so extreme it is called ‘iron mahogany.’” I also want to point out that the foundation is not only Chaim’s studio, but has four floors of artwork as well. The second floor has changing exhibitions, with a library and storage. The third floor is my parents’ original living room, which has a current salon exhibition. The exhibit for this summer [2014], *Circa 1945*, features abstract paintings from the forties, which my father collected.” Works by over forty artists are included: Fernand Léger, Milton Avery, Stuart Davis, Willem de Kooning, Roberto Matta, Byron Browne, Picasso, and Chagall. Chaim Gross’s personal collection illustrates the dividing line between the Figurative paintings of the Depression era and the emergence of the Abstract Expressionists in the forties. The collection together conflates the belated radical distinctions that were blurred at the time.

One of Mimi Gross’s recent works, *Afternoon at Herring Cove Beach, Four Figures* (2014), evokes the afternoon haze at the Provincetown beach, where she swims most summer days. It pictures Charles Bernstein, Susan Bee, their son Felix, and Mira Schor, who have gone to relax in the sun and ended up in self-absorbed communion, with young Felix contemplating his future life, sandwiched between his father busy with his writing, his mother sketching, and Mira deeply immersed with a book. The wave-like flow of figures reflects their rapt rapport with the mediums and the traditions that bond them. 

CHRISTOPHER BUSA is editor of Provincetown Arts.



Full Moon and Window, Provincetown, 2005

George Hirose

DARKNESS IS LARGE

By Christopher Busa

GEORGE HIROSE, a Japanese-American photographer born in New York City, first began visiting Provincetown about fifteen years ago, mesmerized by the stunning irradiation known as “Cape light.” He also became fascinated by the town’s strong connection to its past, its enduring and historic architecture, and the creative energy of the community. Surrounded by eddying water, refracted by the little mirrors in millions of granules strewn across miles of quartz sand, the atmosphere was animated. People say the famous Cape sunlight hits the walls of white clapboard houses with the power of a bronze gong.

Reading his light meter, Hirose learned to set the f-stop of his camera shutter at a higher register. He had studied the black-and-white photographs of talented predecessors who had earlier documented the area, such as John Gregory, Paul Koch, and Joyce Johnson. Hirose was especially taken aback by the luminous photographs of Joel Meyerowitz, whose book *Cape Light* (1979) was to become the best-selling book of color photography in America, breaking new ground for photographers. Although Meyerowitz had taken a number of photographs in late afternoon, when the light was less intense, he took none at night. Hirose found his niche by setting his camera on a tripod after darkness had fully descended, leaving the shutter open sometimes for as long as forty minutes in order to absorb every iota of available light. He loved nights when the moon was full, looking as serenely blue as the calm water of the daytime bay. He loved how occasional

automobile headlights, passing on Commercial Street, would link over time to form a continuous stream. He loved the way a yellow beach ball, reflected in a storefront window, catching a glint from a street lamp, summoned the hyper-brightness of high noon.

Hirose showed some of his photographs to Norman Mailer, who had been a friend and neighbor of Meyerowitz and whose work was one of the reasons Hirose had come to Provincetown. But Meyerowitz, Hirose said, “was discouraging in that he owned the market on daytime photography on the Cape.” And Hirose did not feel that his own daytime photographs revealed his own personal investment. He was struck by one Meyerowitz photograph, however, his favorite, taken at twilight, of Beach Point cottages. Colored light emanated from the interior of the open door of a parked car, exposing a secret that became Hirose’s clue. Meyerowitz had worked



6th Street and Avenue B Community Garden, New York City, 2011



House and Garden, Provincetown, 2011



Old Taves Boat Yard, Provincetown, 2008

all the hours till twilight; Hirose decided to work the opposite clock, beginning where Meyerowitz left off and shooting until dawn.

Mailer asked to see some of Hirose's new photographs, spreading the images out on his dining room table. The author, Hirose said, had an intense visceral response that transported him back to the first time he had visited Provincetown in June 1943, shortly after graduation from Harvard, when the war still raged and the town was blacked out. Hirose recalled, "It took Mailer about fifteen minutes before he asked if I would do him a favor and work with him on a book. I was stunned." Mailer fed him ideas, suggesting he photograph lighthouses and boats, which Hirose had hitherto shied away from, out of a desire to avoid cliché. Hirose asked Mailer for help with titles, most of which were strictly literal—streets, dates, and place-names. Mailer urged him to find titles that evoked more of a narrative, more of a story, and this prompting helped the developing portfolio begin to transcend time and take on emotional overtones.

Mailer came up with the title for the book, *Blue Nights*, which was published by Provincetown Arts Press in 2008. The two had been talking about the color blue and the mood a smoky blue engenders in sultry music; Mailer looked at Hirose and said, "So the nights are very blue to you." Mailer, in his introduction to the published book, wrote of his first memory, walking down a ghostly Commercial Street, here and there seeing a candle flicker on the sheen of a curtain:

I do not know that I have ever been more aware of the presence of the moon. One's sense of time now seemed more sensitive to the past, so much so, indeed, that one could suppose oneself returned in some small measure to events gone long before one had entered one's own life.

So, as I took these steps through the dark dimensionalities of the subtle light provided, I had a rare pleasure. . . . I had received a gift. I now had some living idea of that colonial era when the roots of my country were first readying themselves for a mighty future.

Mailer pondered how the night was expansive and concluded, "Darkness is large," suggesting that the immensity of the unknown serves to expand our vision, and here is located the source of Hirose's engagement with nocturnal life. The cones of our eyes function in daylight to focus our retinas with a spectrum of vivid hues; only at night are our rod cells superior, when they adapt to darkness and grasp the diffuse periphery—blurred, apparitional, conflated glimpses seen from the corners of our eyes. The camera became a magic medium for Hirose to access a sixth sense of seeing hidden color. He sought to make mystery visible.

Hirose questioned, if a photograph typically reveals a "decisive moment," as Henri Cartier-Bresson put it, then what would be decisive about his elongated moments of lengthy exposures? Things happen. In one photograph Hirose took of a party gathered on a beach around a bonfire, one figure in silhouette stood and suddenly his doppelgänger sprang into view, framed by flames, and there



Monument Hill, Provincetown, 2011



Lobster Pot, Provincetown, 2013



After the Catch, Provincetown, 2007

were two heads, one sitting, its specter upright. He saw that decisive moments can happen within long exposures. On an empty street, a car's headlights suddenly appear. Streaks of stars in the skies became a scene of action for him. Hirose had gotten his start as a classic black-and-white street photographer, following the lead of Robert Frank, Garry Winogrand, and Lee Friedlander. "That's in my soul," he said, "and can't be removed." Thus, he continues to look for sudden moments, images that happen by chance. But now he understands that the camera sees things very differently than the eye: "The image is already there. But it's a matter of identifying what is there."

One key element in a good photograph is the angle from which it is taken. Like the role of point of view in a novel, a unique perspective implies that somebody is looking. Hirose's photographs seldom deal with people, yet people are implied by the structures they live in or in the toys strewn by their children on the lawn after the family is asleep.

Recently, Hirose journeyed to Japan to reveal the nightlife hidden in the narrow neighborhoods of Tokyo. A resident of the Lower East Side in Manhattan, he is also drawn to photographing the many community gardens that have sprung up on empty lots owned by the city, restoring some pastoral spirit to urban areas inundated with seedy, crime-ridden blocks, the buildings scarred with scrawled graffiti. These gardens, in the surreal contrast of their fertility growing in the crevices of a sterile environment, have been recognized for providing spiritual relief to local inhabitants, offering a solace akin to Central Park elsewhere in the city. Hirose has documented, so far, about thirty of these gardens.

In one nighttime photograph, viewed through a tropical profusion of leaping plants, the lit windows of an apartment building peek through. In this photo, *6th Street and Avenue B Community Garden*, Hirose kept his tripod very low in order to capture the garden from the perspective of his daughter, Ryoko, when she viewed it as a child, and it was one of her favorite spots. Somewhat heroically, Hirose—who has always been, he says, "a night person"—attempts to over-extenuate the colors in his nighttime photographs, so that they recall the colors of daytime, only more brilliantly. 🌃

CHRISTOPHER BUSA is editor of Provincetown Arts.

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Art and Politics in China

By Joan Lebold Cohen

Make patriotism into the main melody of literature and art creation.

THIS WAS THE ADMONITION to China's art leaders by Xi Jinping, the country's bold new ruler. On October 15, 2014, at China's Forum on Art and Literature, Communist Party General Secretary Xi Jinping instructed the art world:

Celebrate the rejuvenation of China. To create excellent work . . . and carry forward the Chinese spirit . . . celebrate the banner of the Socialist core value system in a life-like manner. Make patriotism into the main melody. . .

Xi Jinping's words are an important evolution of his vision trademark *Chinese Dream*, which recalls Mao Zedong's famous May 1942 *Talks at the Yanan Forum on Literature and Art*, proclaimed from the Party's revolutionary base in Yanan long before he achieved nationwide power in 1949. Mao's words profoundly influenced Party policies toward the arts until his death in 1976.

There is no such thing as art for art's sake, art that stands above classes, art that is detached from or independent of politics . . . as Lenin said, [artists are] cogs and wheels in the revolutionary machine.

Anyone familiar with international art in the fifty years since Mao's death in 1976 knows that his directive has diminished in many ways over three decades. Subsequent Chinese art leaders have tolerated great experimentation above and beyond the Chinese Communist Party messages—while still defining limits.

Long before Communism, Chinese artists devised ways of communicating that eluded the political watchers whose job it was to decode the art. They have developed subtle techniques that challenge hard rules and veil humor and irreverence through ambiguity and nuance. Here are a few examples of contemporary artists who are in the mainstream nationally and internationally, express themselves pointedly, and manage to exhibit in China as well as abroad.

GU WENDA

In 1988, Gu Wenda was a graduate student in the painting department at the prestigious China Academy of Art in Hangzhou. It was a time of unparalleled freedom and experimentation under Communist rule. He was engaged in Chinese calligraphy—the traditional medium using brush and ink, an ancient, and uniquely Chinese, art. The written characters created more than three thousand years ago have been a sacred element of Chinese culture, and the Chinese generally believe characters must be formed in the conventional manner. But 1988 was a time when some young artists were pushing the edges of the allowable, and Gu Wenda wrote large poster-size characters on big surfaces, and omitted some strokes.

The cultural department interpreted this to be an assault on the establishment, the academy, and the Chinese tradition. Gu Wenda believed that he was about to be sanctioned and was able to exit the country before denunciation, moving to New York, where he lived for more than twenty years. In New York, he gained recognition through broadly conceived international

projects. In one notable project, he built forms both architectural and calligraphic, crafted from the hair of people from all over the world. He created walls of hair and glue and formed them into arched pavilions and multilingual statements. To him, they represented the “transcultural reality in our world.”¹ With United Nations sponsorship and exhibitions in many spaces worldwide, he became an international art star.

In the glow of foreign success, Gu Wenda was then able to return to China and now continues to deconstruct canonical Chinese icons without political interference. One current theme is focused on burned incense and charred Buddhas—not an especially sensitive subject, but one that conveys an important message.

XU BING

Amid the great experimentation and remarkable freedom of 1988 China, another promising artist, Xu Bing, graduated from the print department at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing. That same year, he exhibited his controversial *Book from the Sky* at Beijing's National Art Museum of China (NAMOC). This work was composed of a series of beautifully printed books, handsomely displayed on platforms, and long scroll-like banners, printed on handmade paper and floating above on wires. While they displayed elements and characteristics of real Chinese characters, the meticulously printed characters were actually artistic inventions and illegible.

What was Xu Bing trying to convey in these works? They were all printed on handmade paper with newly invented fonts, executed with precision and panache. And yet they are totally puzzling because we have no decoder to offer us their meaning. One might speculate that Xu Bing, in creating scrolls and books that look like the Chinese classics, similar to the writings of Confucius and Laozu, is suggesting that the old wisdom has no meaning today. The old rules no longer apply.

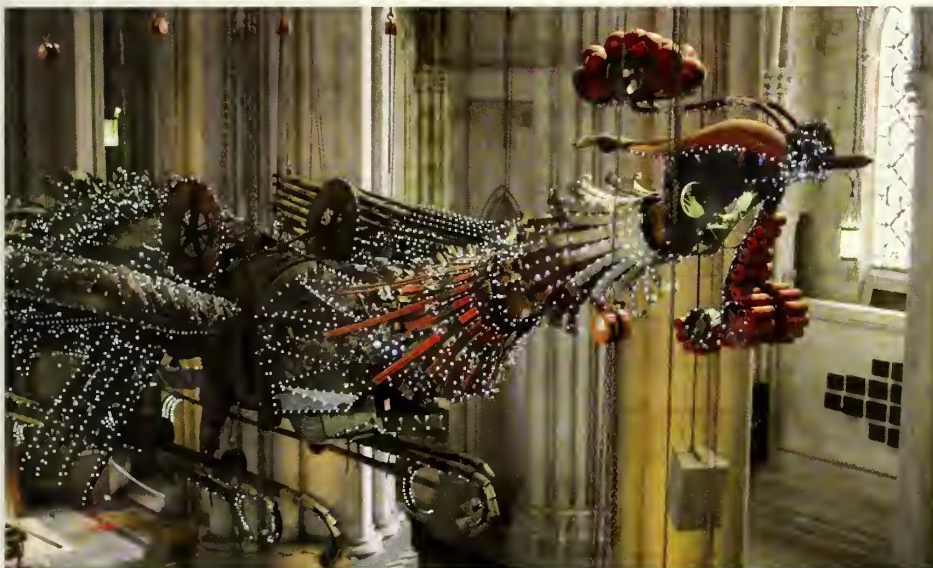
To understand Xu Bing's art, it is important to look at his childhood influences. His father was a university professor, and Xu Bing played in the university library before he could even read. He saw countless books with Chinese characters and, while he could not read them, he was intrigued by their forms. Moreover, at the time Xu Bing was learning to read in school, Mao Zedong was experimenting with simplifying Chinese characters with the intention of making them easier to read. Xu Bing has said that, when he began learning real characters during this experimental period, he would learn the characters one week, only to have to relearn them the following week when they were changed.² This challenge to the traditional order was also a challenge to literacy, and yet it inspired Xu Bing to follow his creative and intellectual instincts and form his unique ideographs.

Was Xu Bing's art an assault on the old culture in accordance with Mao's instruction to destroy the old to create the new? Or was he following his own creative and intellectual instincts with no intended political meaning? Either way, his work gained a great deal of attention—*Book from the Sky* was a sensation in the Chinese art world of 1988.

The next year—after the tragic June 4, 1989, massacre at Tiananmen Square—Xu Bing left China and came to North America, like many of his compatriots. He flourished in the United States and became the first Chinese artist to win a prestigious MacArthur award recognizing “exceptional merit and promise for continued and enhanced creative work.” Despite his success in the United States, in 2008 he decided to return to China to become vice president of the Central Academy of Fine Arts. He has since continued to produce exceptional works of art, such as his installation sculpture, *Phoenix*, which is composed of two birds, a male called Feng and a female called Huang, that together weigh twelve tons and measure ninety



Guo Jian, *The Meat*, 2014, board and meat, 35 by 250 by 500 centimeters



Xu Bing, *Phoenix*, 2008–15, construction debris and light emitting diodes, 27 and 28 meters in length, 8 meters in width
(top) Installation view at the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine, New York City, 2014–15
(above) Installation view at MASS MoCA, North Adams, MA, 2012–13

and one hundred feet long. This piece was flown overhead in enormous spaces at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS Moca) during 2012–13 and the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine in New York City during 2014–15.

In Chinese mythology, the phoenix dies and then rises again, reborn, pure and beautiful, from the ashes of the past. Xu Bing's phoenixes seem an optimistic symbol of new China, showcasing its great strength in the Post-modern world. The giant phoenix birds were created from culled detritus, the leftovers from construction sites across the massively changing urban landscape of Beijing and elsewhere in China. They are dramatic sculptures that reflect China's last three decades of extraordinary development.

SUI JIANGUO

The sculptor Sui Jianguo, professor of sculpture at the Central Academy of Art in Beijing, produced some of the most amusing and provocative work of the 1990s. Although he worked on the edge of artistic/political boundaries, he not only was not arrested but has been allowed to show nationally and internationally. His giant cast bronze *Mao Jacket*, one of an iconic series of Mao jackets, was displayed on New York's Park Avenue median at Seventieth Street in front of the Asia Society in 2008. In the jacket's details, it evoked the era when Mao Zedong's Red Army sought to demonstrate that all men and women were equal, by having all military personnel wear jackets without insignias. In the people's army, this was also a way to diminish the distinction between foot soldiers and leaders. Yet there had to be a way to identify the leaders; thus, the pocket system was devised. Military tunics displayed different numbers of pockets. Of course, Mao Zedong, the Great Leader, had four on his tunic—the maximum number of pockets and the same number we see on the headless eight-foot bronze Mao jacket produced by Sui Jianguo.

This fearless sculptor has created many other pieces that parody life in China. For example, he put a number of large stone boulders in iron chains—suggesting, perhaps, that there are people who cannot speak because their minds are chained. I visited the artist's studio at the Central Academy and saw perhaps his most striking piece, *The Chairman*, a representation of the feet of the Chairman himself in clay.

It would not do this artist justice to omit a reference to his creation of a zoo full of plastic dinosaurs, armies of behemoths eight feet tall that tower over zoo railings, accompanied by tens of thousands of his tiny dinosaur monster toys. He packs both irony and comedy in to these works by bringing attention to the huge Chinese plastic export trade as well as the evolutionary comedy of Postmodern times.

AI WEIWEI

Mao said "Let the past serve the present," and Ai Weiwei has executed this directive in works by literally reforming antique wooden tables and chairs crafted in the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), transforming them into contemporary sculptural items. These objects made from wood of times past have been given a new life, yet retain echoes of a great tradition. To be sure, this work is not without controversy—preservationists cry out against his destruction and repurposing of treasured relics of the past.

Ai Weiwei was subsequently arrested and harshly detained by Beijing police—not for his destruction of

antique furniture, but for his insistence that the schoolchildren who died in the 2008 Sichuan earthquake be named and memorialized. They died because their schools were built with cheap, substandard materials—Sichuan officials had siphoned off funds meant to build earthquake-resistant schools. After the earthquake, officials even refused to reveal the children's names, as if by hiding the identities of the 5,385 children, they could hide their own wrongdoing. To add to the dimensions of this tragedy, most of the victims were the only children from one-child families, parents who had abided by the Chinese national birth-control law.

Few Chinese artists, however, are as blatantly provocative as Ai Weiwei, and many cope with

the Communist party line in more subtle ways. Some endure criticism and other sanctions that are designed to force artists and others to conform with what the Chinese Communist Party says is acceptable. Sanctions are varied and many involve restrictions on where one can exhibit work. An exhibition can be closed down before it opens if the CCP does not approve it, and Beijing exhibitions are especially sensitive since they are so close to the CCP base. The greater the distance from Beijing, the more likely the chance that experimental art will be shown. However, the CCP art bureaucracy is vast and functions efficiently, and there are official watchers even in remote places. Artists in China's vast talent pool conform—or are harassed. Officials may also try to win the artist over through reeducation sessions. Artists who don't conform often leave China—or end up detained for shorter or longer periods by police.

GUO JIAN

Party restrictions on art are often more severe than usual during politically sensitive periods, especially the weeks preceding the anniversary of the June 4, 1989, massacre near Beijing's Tiananmen Square. In 2014, for example, Guo Jian, an Australian—formerly Chinese—artist, was detained by police for fifteen days for memorializing this tragedy, not in a museum or art gallery or even on the street, but in the privacy of his Beijing apartment.

The Communist Party seeks to control the portrayal of Chinese history, and it strives obsessively to

suppress all references to the June 4 confrontation between the Chinese people and the People's Liberation Army. For Guo Jian, incarceration added insult to injury because, before leaving for Australia, he had served for three years in the PLA, despite his misgivings about its June 4 misconduct. Moreover, fifteen days in a Beijing jail was no picnic, even for a former soldier. There were thirteen people in his cell, but only eight bunks and no chairs. Prisoners had to take turns lying on the beds, changing every two hours. Not many artists want to risk such punishment, not to mention the much longer confinement that more stubborn resisters receive.

Guo Jian's Tiananmen memorial, shown only to a few friends and sympathizers, was far more specific than the work of most of his artist counterparts. He re-created Tiananmen Square in miniature—a sacred space to Chinese—which he then covered with raw ground pork, a bold and bloody recollection of the slaughter. Perhaps he believed he could get away with this unappetizing home protest not only because of its low visibility but also because of his Australian citizenship. The Chinese government, however, does not spare foreigners, especially naturalized ethnic Chinese. Actually, Guo Jian's foreign passport may have saved him from the harsher punishments to which Chinese human-rights activists are subjected.

Sadly, Chinese artists who hope for greater freedom cannot look to the country's new leader for support. Xi Jinping's vision of "celebrating socialism and making patriotism the main melody" plainly contradicts the artist's independent mission and even has Maoist echoes in theory and practice. Most Chinese artists, if they want to live in their homeland and exhibit their art, will have to continue to rely on well-honed, subtle techniques for creating and surviving. Perhaps their consolation—and ours—is that sometimes dictatorial repression stimulates artistic expression and courage of the human spirit. 🍷

*JOAN LEBOLD COHEN is an art historian and a photographer who specializes in Chinese art and film. She has been a frequent resident in Asia since 1961, including China during the dramatic, post-Cultural Revolution periods of 1979–1981 and 2002–2005. Her book *The New Chinese Painting, 1949–1986* introduced the recent generations of Chinese artists to the West. She has served as curator for many exhibitions of new Chinese art as well as presenting many of her own photographic exhibitions in New York and internationally. She is the author and photographer of books, including *China Today* and *Her Ancient Treasures*, coauthored with her husband, Jerome Alan Cohen. Joan was a lecturer at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts/Tufts University in Boston for twenty-two years.*

Notes:

1. Contemporary Chinese Art, Primary Documents, page 258, MoMA, 2010.
2. Britta Erickson, "Process and Meaning in the Art of Xu Bing," *Three Installations by Xu Bing*, Catalogue, November 30, 1991–January 19, 1992, Elvehjem Museum of Art, University of Wisconsin-Madison.



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Light—Palette—Action

MAURICE FREEDMAN, AMERICAN MODERNIST PAINTER (1904–1985)

By Mary Sherman

This is an excerpt adapted from a catalogue essay published by the Provincetown Art Association and Museum for their exhibition this summer, Maurice Freedman: Light, Palette, Action!, curated by Mary Sherman.

MAURICE FREEDMAN was a remarkable painter. Even when the heady days of Abstract Expressionism dominated the art market, his paintings continued to attract collectors and receive critical acclaim.

Little, though, has been made of his work with the film companies Pathé, RKO, and Columbia Pictures. At a time when people like Saul Bass were substituting movie stars with iconic graphics, Freedman was creating posters sporting close-ups, dramatic juxtapositions, and inventive blocks of text, joining star power with narrative verve. The result was instant Hollywood drama and allure; the promise of lives like ours, but more enchanting, beautiful, and alive—a life behind suburban blight, Warhol's soup cans, and Lichtenstein's comic book sobs.

Whereas his fellow American artist Edward Hopper painted life as if it were a theater set—with a harsh abstract light and spare interiors—Freedman painted it as if it were a movie set, full of glamour and portent. His depicted evenings are often graced by full moons; his landscapes, such as *Drive from Amalfi*, frequently showcase hairpin turns, giving way to beautiful ocean views.

In *Wellfleet Studio*, with a dog napping in the foreground of a beautifully suffused mauve and blue sky-lit studio, there is the suggestion that the artist has run off into the night's charms: the door is ajar, a candle snuffed out, glasses left on a stool, brushes abandoned, and the dog looking all too knowingly at us—not even bothering to remain alert for his master's return. Clearly, it will be a while. And, since there's nowhere for us to sit—a vase occupies the remaining chair—Freedman's painting suggests that we might as well leave the daily grind of our lives as well and join the artist in the coming dawn of a rosy day, evident behind the left window. The artist has left the scene (exit: center stage), and we are invited to follow.



Wellfleet Studio, 1977, oil on canvas, 50 by 64 inches COURTESY OF D. WIGMORE FINE ART, NEW YORK



Mast and Stars, 1950, oil on canvas, 30 by 40 inches COLLECTION OF PHILIP F. MAY AND ANNE L. MAY



DONALD BEAL GEORGE HIROSE CHRISTOPHER SOUSA
SIÂN ROBERTSON JAMIE CASERTANO KATHY COTTER
ROBERT GOLDSTROM ADAM PECK DAVID SOKOSH
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LETTER FROM MAURICE FREEDMAN TO HIS MOTHER:

My dear mother... I have been working out a very fine problem in painting. My work looks very conservative but sound constructive and modern principles are the underlying features. This gives my work added strength—contrasting the cubistic with the realistic. I am painting a great deal from models, for when I get on the Riviera I shall paint nothing but landscapes. Models cost me the terrific sum of 60¢ for 3 hours. In N.Y. it would be \$4.00. Rosabelle's sister Dorothy is in Paris

"I have been working out a very fine problem in painting. My work looks very conservative but sound constructive and modern principles are the underlying features. This gives my work added strength—contrasting the cubistic with the realistic. I am painting a great deal from models, for when I get on the Riviera, I shall paint nothing but landscapes. Models cost me the terrific sum of 60¢ for 3 hours. In N.Y. it would be \$4.00..."

These promises of wistful reveries appear again and again in different guises—as, for instance, a swashbuckling adventure in *Mast and Stars* and the drawing for *The Bandit of Sherwood Forest*, or a jet-setting escape in *New York Nocturne*. And, of course, romance abounds. Moonlit skies, such as in the stunning *Studio Moonlight No. 3*, borrow from montage, again, conflating time. In *Studio Moonlight No. 3*, an open window frames Provincetown. Therein, the sky has switched from a deep twilight to a brighter palette filled with city lights. Below is a nearly day lit terrace. Time unfolds before us. Day shifts to night with a glass of wine waiting on the left and the kind of regal, red chair of a star producer, dead center.

Freedman's canvases are places of momentary transport. They remind us of life's joys. They encourage us to find pleasure when we can because—as his frequently non-populated canvases remind us—life is fleeting. Its joys are not to be wasted. Instead they are to be savored with the kind of gusto that only a painter such as Maurice Freedman could serve up for our needed escapes to Provincetown's shores. 🍷

MARY SHERMAN is an artist who also teaches, writes criticism, and curates. She is also the founder and director of the international arts organization TransCultural Exchange.



(above) Illustration for poster of *The Bandit of Sherwood Forest*, 1946, Columbia Pictures, ink, pencil, and gouache on tracing vellum, 14 by 11 inches
(below) Maurice Freedman, 1930, Saint-Tropez



Donald Beal's Memory Landscapes

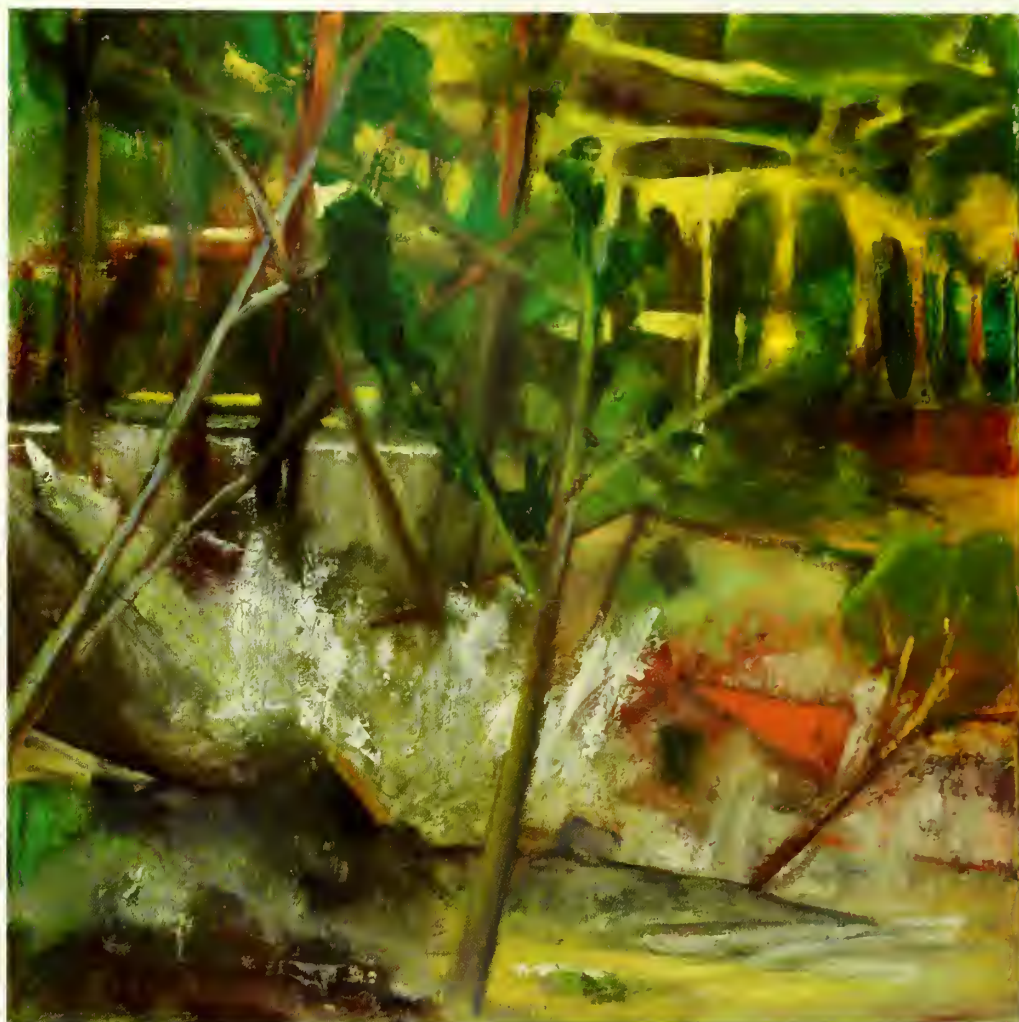
By Anna Dempsey

DONALD BEAL, artist and Provincetown resident, has been exhibiting his paintings on the Cape for nearly thirty years. Beal resides in a charming house near the center of Provincetown, and his work reflects not only New England's light, color, and landscape, but also his own unique, invented places. Anthony Fisher, a painter who has known the artist for thirty years, remembers, "I first saw his paintings as sincere explorations of visual problems." Even today, Fisher states that there is no "artifice" or "embellishment" in Beal's work.

Like many other artists, Beal had a number of extraordinary teachers who profoundly influenced his artistic development. As a young man, he nurtured his Expressionistic style at the Swain School of Design in New Bedford (where he studied with David Loeffler Smith, a student of well-known Modernist painter and teacher Hans Hofmann). He earned an MFA in painting at the Parsons School of Design in New York, where his teachers included Paul Resika and Leland Bell. Today, he is a professor of fine arts who shares his educational and professional knowledge with visual art students at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth.

Recently, Beal has completed a series of landscapes that subtly challenge what it means to be a Representational landscape painter. At first glance, this work may remind the viewer of Camille Pissarro's luminous Impressionist landscapes or Nicolas Poussin's Arcadian sylvan forests. Like these earlier painters, this Provincetown artist creates richly textured seascapes and timeless woodlands. However, unlike Pissarro's beachscapes and Poussin's classical pastoral settings, Beal's work can seem jolting and quixotic—his strangely familiar landscapes defy easy categorization and understanding. If we linger with them, we cannot help but be drawn into the artist's deceptively beautiful worlds, where traces of the past and present disjunctively—and yet somehow harmoniously—reside.

In *The Great Flood* (2014), Beal encapsulates the history of New England's stormy winters in a single image. Slender trees sway and topple over. Bridges, houses, and other human creations are no match for the cascading waters. Like Leonardo da Vinci's 1515 drawing of the deluge, Beal's flooded landscape is one that cannot be stilled or controlled. Trees, rocks, and man-made structures fragment and tumble into a chaotic vortex that punctuates a dynamic landscape in transition.



The Great Flood, 2014, oil on canvas, 20 by 20 inches

Though the artist depicts the power of nature, his work does not simply document it. Rather, Beal's landscapes illuminate a conversation between humanity and the natural world that occurs over time. He captures this unfolding conversation with thin layers of paint through which we can see material traces of the built environment. Clearly, these once sturdy structures are now frail and crumbling. In the image, they function as a visual synecdoche for human civilization—and for the painting process as well. According to the artist: "I'm at a point in my work where an aspect of memory has been leaking into unbidden places and becomes part of the process that shapes the painting as it seeks a form." That is, the artist attempts to represent our collective imprint on the landscape as filtered through his personal consciousness—a consciousness that emerges with each brushstroke.

In an interview from the *Paris Review*, Mark Strand, a poet whose words encapsulate the artist's process, lucidly describes creativity as one in which

the sensory flow of the hand quells the rational activity of the brain:

Well, I think what happens at certain points in my poems is that language takes over, and I follow it. It just sounds right. And I trust the implication of what I'm saying, even though I'm not absolutely sure what it is that I'm saying. I'm just willing to let it be.

For Beal, Strand's words articulate what happens as he paints: Initially, the formal visual language "suggests something. I try to cultivate it and foster it, and as I continue to work with the language of color, shape, and line, it becomes its own little world. All my experiences, education, and training start to seep in, in ways that I don't plan. But as I continue to paint, something starts to feel familiar."

Even in Beal's idyllic, pastoral landscapes, he populates the canvas with ambiguous, uncanny



(top to bottom) *Family Outing*, 2014, oil on canvas, 18 by 21 inches; *Bathers*, 2013, oil on canvas, 19½ by 18 inches; *The Smallpox Graveyard*, 2013, oil on canvas, 16 by 19 inches

forms that reflect this creative process. In *Family Outing* (2014), though a father and his two children appear to engage in typical outdoor activities, we soon realize they are also frozen in place. On closer inspection, we observe that they are transforming into something nonhuman. Like the protagonist in Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*, each will evolve into another organic form—in this case, the family will morph into trees and merge with the surrounding landscape. Eventually, these trees will crumble, decay, and merge with the earth—as suggested by the mini-landscape on the lower right. While the painting captures the natural ecological process and the passage of time, it materializes Beal's creative explorations as well; he captures an unfolding narrative, one that encapsulates the artistic and natural life cycles.

Beal's portrayal and distillation of time are also evocatively rendered in *Bathers* (2013). In this Impressionistic, jewel-toned work, sensual warm-pink nudes transform into trees and leaves. These, in turn, dissipate into the pure sunlit vapor that spills out of the frame on the right—or is it the other way around? Have the two figures emerged from a primeval sea to enter a Garden of Eden? Perhaps their sensual touch suggests that another story will unfold. Will we see a rebirth of the natural world? Is this painting about origins? Life cycles? And yet, the grey shadowy tree limbs, which topple into the watery abyss, remind us that the conclusion to these stories, or to any new story, is always the same. The artist's landscapes dissolve as though surrendering to natural forces (the “forces” that also compel his mark-making).

According to painter Anthony Fisher, “Don is more interested in the sensation evoked by the landscape. He thinks in terms of the dynamics and mechanics of visual phenomena.” Beal's paintings are indeed “dynamic” and sensuously evocative, and yet, the artist's landscapes are quite unsettling. “As you lose yourself in nature,” Beal explains, “it can shift from a pastoral and benign place to a violent and discordant one.” Indeed, he adds, if we listen long enough, “the birds may start to sound slightly mad,” as if the world is about to implode.

Death, memory, and transformation loom large in *Bathers*, as they do in most of Beal's recent paintings. This is especially evident in *The Smallpox Graveyard* (2013). In this work, the artist immerses us in a tangled, wooded landscape. Although we might expect to see the gravestones of those who died from smallpox during the nineteenth century, Beal refuses to represent the melancholic space in such an obvious way. Rather, we have to enter the wood and find these symbols of death for ourselves.

In this painting, the viewer must work hard to find the objects through which the dead speak to us in the present. But, with perseverance, we do. A cool, emerald-green branch reaches out to draw us into this haunted place. Although human trauma, horror, and death mark this site, Beal does not allude to the smallpox victims' histories, nor does he represent the appearance of the actual gravestones. Indeed, photographs of them pale in comparison to Beal's white feathery brushstrokes. As such, Beal's insubstantial marks metaphorically encapsulate a history that we cannot fully know or experience. Nevertheless, his *Smallpox Graveyard* does open a portal to the past—one to which he and viewers will return again. According to Walter Benjamin, the well-known literary critic and storyteller:

Language [like painting] shows clearly that memory is not an instrument for exploring the past but its theatre. It is the medium of past experience, as the ground is the medium in which dead cities lie interred. He who seeks to approach his own buried past must conduct himself like a man digging . . . he must not be afraid to return again and again to the same matter. (*A Berlin Chronicle*, 1986)

Just as Benjamin returns to the images and memories of his own past, Beal returns to landscapes and forms, real and imagined, again and again, and yet each of his paintings is distinct. Each marks a moment in time. With them, the artist gently turns our gaze to a past that is slowly drifting away from our continually changing present. But this is as it should be. 🌲

ANNA DEMPSEY is an art historian who teaches at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. She has published essays on contemporary German painters, Iranian film, and modern architecture. Currently, she is working on a book titled *Women Artists: The Untold Story, 1880–1940*, based on research she did as an NEH fellow at the Winterthur Library and Museum.

Copyright and the Arts

By Michael E. Jones

"Good artists copy, great artists steal." — Pablo Picasso

THE CREATIVE OWNERSHIP of works of fine art, poetry and other literary genres, music lyrics, architectural drawings, sculptures, dance routines, and photographs is not a concept fully defined or understood either in the Gagosian galleries of New York City or among visual artists who repurpose other artists' works. Have you ever wondered who owns the graffiti a street artist like Banksy or Shepard Fairey leaves behind on a decaying building? Can a monkey really claim ownership in a selfie? Does that tattoo on your arm infringe upon someone's property right? The answers to these kinds of questions, while offensive to some artists, are creating a compelling debate in the law of copyright.

Copyright law is a category of intellectual property law. It refers to the exclusive intangible property rights of the mind granted to those who creatively express an original idea. However, copyright protects the manifestation of an idea, not the idea itself. In what may be a surprise to many, copyright is also a legal interest distinct from the right to possess or own the physical work. For example, copyrights grant authors and artists an economic benefit for a limited time from the fruits of their creative efforts in exchange for adding to the enlightenment of the marketplace of ideas.

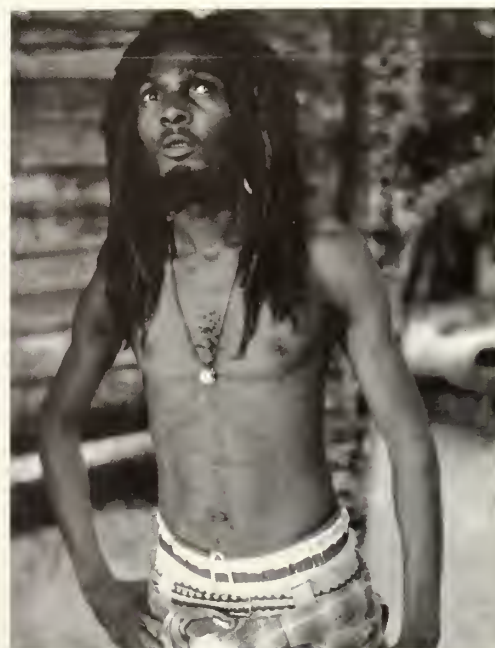
In other words, copyright literally means the right to copy or reproduce. This, however, isn't the only legal right granted to artists and authors of selective creative works. The owners of a copyright have the sole right to publicly display, perform, sell, distribute, and prepare adaptations or derivative works. These legal rights are readily transferred into economic benefits by assigning or selling them for value or consideration. Over the years, Congress has enacted several different copyright statutes that have increased the categories of works protected, enlarged specific rights, and added to the term length of protection. The law recognizes that not all unauthorized uses of an artist's work of art or literature qualify as illegal infringements. The novel and challenging aspects of copyright law occur in the sticky statutory exceptions or exclusions.

Media specialists know that a major shield to a charge of copyright infringement is the fair-use defense. This doctrine permits an author or

artist to copy works for purposes such as public criticism, news reporting, commentary, teaching, scholarship, or research. Artists from Pablo Picasso to Andy Warhol freely admit to having "borrowed" or "stolen" from the art of other pioneer artists. The digital world enables musicians to remix songs and visual artists to effortlessly cut, paste, and collage from the works of others—a technique that began more than a century ago when Georges Braque initiated the practice of incorporating bits of emerging culture, such as newspaper articles and typeface, into his paintings. The challenge then and now is this: at what point is the newly created art form legally sufficient to stand on its own as an original art form, as opposed to being challenged as infringing on the copyright of the original artist?

APPROPRIATION ART

Basically, appropriation in art is the use of objects, images, or an existing work of art to create a new work of art. Appropriation artists such as Shepard Fairey, Jeff Koons, and Richard Prince expose the complicated tension between intellectual property rights and artistic freedom. In a hotly contested fair-use face-off between a serious photographer, Patrick Cariou, and Richard Prince, an artist who rephotographed his work, a federal court of appeals largely decided in favor of Prince. He had purchased a copy of a book on Rastafarians (*Yes Rasta*) by the French photographer Cariou. He tore out Cariou's images and used them as a starting point for his artistic



(left) Richard Prince, *Cookie Crumbles*, 2008, photograph
(above) Patrick Cariou, *Yes Rasta*, 2000, photograph

composition. Prince enlarged the black-and-white prints, incorporated color, distorted some of the human forms, and changed the media to canvas paintings. In a split decision, the court found that Prince's artworks may "reasonably be perceived" as a new and original, noninfringing transformative work.

An example of one of the disputed works is seen on the previous page with Cariou's photograph on the left and Prince's painting on the right.

The same New York federal appeals court was challenged to assess fair use when a book publisher used without permission seven images of Grateful Dead concert posters. After failing to reach a licensing agreement, the publisher decided anyway to incorporate thumbnail-size remixed compositions of the posters along with historical textual explanations in the book *Grateful Dead: The Illustrated Trip*. In *Bill Graham Archives v. Dorling Kindersley*, the court weighed the four fair-use factors—purpose and character of the use, nature of the copyrighted work, amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole, and market effect—in finding in favor of the publisher. Overall, the book was a transformative, remixed synthesis in collage form encrypted with other graphic art, which entitled it to its own copyright protection.

The lesson here for all appropriation artists is that, in the right context—creatively remixing the work of another author or artist by using as little as possible of the original source material and engaging in thoughtful commentary or criticism (even in a humorous manner, such as parody)—the creation of new works can qualify as noninfringing fair use, and does not require permission.

TATTOO ART

Recently, the Honolulu Museum of Art and Milwaukee Art Museum hosted exhibits featuring the "renaissance in tattooing." According to a Harris Interactive poll, one in five US adults has a tattoo. If, indeed, tattoos are art, then who owns them?

Tattoo art can qualify for protection under copyright law as long as it is an original work of expression fixed in a tangible form. In a case that made headlines a few years ago, the boxer Mike Tyson had a distinctive facial tribal tattoo printed on the left side of his face. The artist who created the tattoo had copyrighted the image. Mike Tyson signed a release that acknowledged all art images and photographs related to this tattoo belonged to the tattoo artist.

The litigation fun began when the Tyson tattoo played a pivotal plot role in the Warner Bros. movie *Hangover II*. One of the lead film characters wakes up after a night of debauchery wearing a tattoo that by all appearances is identical to the copyrighted tribal tattoo. The tattoo artist and Warner Bros. settled their dispute out of court; however, in a preliminary ruling the court indicated that the movie studio was indeed infringing on the copyright.

SELFIE ART

Selfies—the act of taking spontaneous photographs with a smartphone and an outstretched arm—are

ubiquitous. Ellen DeGeneres's Academy Awards selfie was tweeted around the world. David "Big Papi" Ortiz caught President Obama off-guard in their selfie, which may have been commercially motivated by Samsung's business relationship with Ortiz.

Ordinarily, a selfie qualifies for copyright protection when it presents a minimum degree of creativity. A mere shred of creative spark is all that is required, according to the US Supreme Court. Could a monkey be the source of that creativity? A female monkey, using a camera "borrowed" from a nature photographer, David J. Slater, snapped selfies. One of the images went viral. Slater asked Wikipedia to remove the posted image. Wikipedia denied the request, asserting that a monkey cannot claim a copyright.

Alas, the creative element requirement must be produced by an exercise of human intelligence, according to the US Copyright Office. A monkey apparently lacks human intellect, and therefore fails the creativity test. To the chagrin of animal-rights activists, it's now okay to make copies of all those finger-painting drawings by gorillas you bought a few years ago.

The unanswered question though is whether the person who owned the camera the monkey used is entitled to claim copyright ownership. The specific legal issue is whether he or she is the "author." The short answer is "no." Since the authors are not the people who actually shaped the photograph, they are out of luck. Wikipedia, and any other entity or website, is free to use the monkey's selfie for news, editing, or public comment, or to appropriate the image into a new art form for free, because it is part of the public domain.

ARTISTS WHO CREATE GRAFFITI

It wasn't long ago that spray-painting graffiti artists and stencil-drawing street artists were regarded as vandals contributing to urban blight. But then Banksy's 2010 documentary film, *Exit Through the Gift Shop*, brought to the forefront underground street artists. Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art's exhibition of Shepard Fairey's mixed-media, culturally infused posters, along with the "Art in the Streets" first-ever survey of the evolution of graffiti and street art by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, also contributed to the public acceptance of writing on walls as mainstream art.

However, graffiti and street art still have distinct characteristics that set them apart from conventional artwork. For example, they frequently convey a political or social message and are created on private property—the act of trespassing by these artists, as evidenced by Banksy's film, is not unusual. It's no surprise then that the owners of public and private property are not always sympathetic to the elaborate symbols, tags, and images that overnight appear on their walls, doors, and billboards.

Is it possible for graffiti and street artists to receive copyright protection? Despite limited case law on the subject, and regardless of the legality of painting on private or public property without permission, copyright protection is justified. Original

works, fixed in any tangible medium, including on an outdoor wall, qualify. The technique employed is irrelevant. The typical length of a copyright is the life of the artist plus 70 years. Artists who create graffiti or street art under a pseudonym, such as "Mr. Brainwash," who was featured in Banksy's film, are creating work that lasts for the lesser of 95 years from first publication or 120 years from date of creation.

Real-estate law plays a significant role in the case of a graffiti street artist who creates public images without permission. The owner of a spray-painted building—the medium—may lawfully destroy, deface, remove, or confiscate the otherwise copyright protected art. The property owner may not reproduce or create derivative works, such as by photographing the image and silk-screening it on a coffee mug or T-shirt because these are exclusive rights of the copyright owner, the graffiti street artist. However, the property owner may sell, lend, or reinstall the cutout section of the spray-painted building—which is precisely what Amazon did in Seattle after it tore down a building and reinstalled the graffiti art in its new building on the same site.

Some graffiti street artists have attempted to argue that there should be an amendment to the basic copyright structure, the Visual Artists Rights Act of 1990 (VARA), to protect even illegal street mural art from destruction. The benefits of VARA apply only to works of art of "recognized stature," so the typical anonymous graffiti or street artist fearful of arrest for defacing property can find no relief here.

In conclusion, the law grants the copyright owner a bundle of distinct rights: to reproduce a work; to prepare derivative rights; to distribute copies; to display, publicly perform, license, and sell a work. And the copyright works by protecting the intangible creative expression of an original idea without actually protecting the idea. As we've seen, a natural tension exists between the public's interest in creatively building upon the art forms of earlier artists and the private, constitutionally protected, economic rights of the original creator. Innovative appropriation art, tattoo art, selfie art, and socially inspired graffiti or street art test the limits of what is copyright protected. No doubt copyright law will continue to be challenged, and redefined, as the debate about originality and creativity continues in a society that constantly remixes something old into something new. 🍷

MICHAEL E. JONES is a former elite athlete, artist, retired judge, and award-winning university professor. He and his wife, Christine, a poet, edited *Timeless: Photography of Rowland Scherman*. Jones authored the popular text *Intellectual Property Law Fundamentals*. His next book is *Beyond the Frame: Art Law for Artists, Curators, and Educators*. Michael and Christine reside in Orleans, Massachusetts.

Christopher Sousa

ARTIST PROFILE

By Taylor M. Polites

AT THE TIME OF our interview, Christopher Sousa is hard at work in his studio, preparing a group of new paintings for the Woodman/Shimko Gallery in Palm Springs and thinking about his fifth annual show at Provincetown's A Gallery this summer. He has the demeanor of an ascetic: slim, cropped hair, short stature, unassuming. The type who stands against the back wall, who does not draw attention to himself. Canvases, half-finished, are stacked against each other. Images are pinned to the walls, some for inspiration, some pieced together to be refashioned on canvas. Smears of paint mark the easels, the bookshelves, the floor. The studio, shared with two other artists, is large, light-filled, and clearly heavily used. It's amazing to consider that Sousa arrived in Provincetown just over twelve years ago with no formal art training beyond his own ambition. His path over those years has been one of hard work and engagement with the small, independent communities of Outer Cape artists who have continued to work and support each other.



Christopher Sousa PHOTO BY BEAU HARRELL

From his early efforts to those of today, Sousa's paintings show a remarkable unity of focus. An untitled portrait from 2010 is representative of this work, with specific details illuminating mood and meaning. A young man sits on a low stool before a white sheet. He is shirtless, wearing long underwear bottoms. His right hand is on his knee, which is large in the foreground; in his left hand, he holds a dry branch, studded with red berries. A white glove is clothespinned to a line that hangs just above his head. Two feathers are taped to his right pectoral. A top hat sits at his feet. Harsh light rakes across him so that his shadow looms large on the sheet. His head is turned away, looking outside the frame. His gaze is focused—maybe something of longing in it? He is handsome, fit, like many of the men Sousa paints, but he is not directly seductive. Rather, we seem to have caught him in an unguarded moment. He does not engage the viewer, his mind is elsewhere.

The allegory of the objects around the man is not clear, but we feel there must be meaning there. The feathers. The berries. The hanging glove—Sousa states that the glove is a reference to Giorgio de Chirico's painting *The Song of Love*. In de Chirico's "metaphysical" painting, seemingly random objects, including a red rubber glove, are assembled in a strange landscape, creating a sense of otherworldly, dreamlike mystery. Something sinister lurks in de Chirico's painting, too. Many of his paintings bear enigmatic titles that heighten that sense of suggested mystery and meaning.

The connection seems clear, a combination of Sousa's passion for painting the figure with the proto-Surrealist vibe of de Chirico's World War I-era work. Sousa's figures, typically male, typically solitary, pose against blank walls or banners, a suspended sheet or a flag. Bone and sinew are revealed in a blast of light that leaves dark shadows at the edges, giving a sinister suggestion. The faces are impassive, with, perhaps, a hint of indifference. Or defiance. Curiosity or calm or vacancy. The figure often has around him an assortment of objects, numinous things, hats, suspenders, trophies, a globe, a spear, a skull. The brushwork is fine, precise. The figures are realistic, beautifully detailed, but something else. Do the deep shadows, the sense of darkness surrounding the figure, create that sense of disproportion? Or are the hands exaggerated? Too large? And those sinews, twisting from shoulder to wrist—are the arms too long? The manipulation is subtle, not clear at first except as an impression, like the fine line between the artistic and the erotic, which seems to combine the push-pull appeal of Sousa's subjects. Something that is both desirable and unsettling at once.

For Sousa, the lone figure is fundamental to the portraits. "If you look at any of them, with only a couple exceptions, they are all solitary, lone figures," he explains. "So to me they all represent isolation to a certain extent. Maybe subconsciously. I always felt like an outsider growing up. I always felt apart from groups."

Sousa builds his composition more for mood than for meaning. "Nothing symbolic about it," Sousa insists. "More the aesthetic of things. I couldn't



Untitled, 2010, oil on canvas, 24 by 18 inches

name a single Renaissance painter as an influence, but I've always been attracted to those things, weird icons, the periphery always containing objects that are significant. I want to emulate the look of those. So . . . the mystery is totally open. I'm not trying to introduce something into the viewer's subconscious." Yet there is something compelling in the combinations, the hint at something dark, isolated, the sense of being bared, exposed before the eye of the viewer.

Add to the mix Sousa's lifelong fascination with illustration. He remembers his father's *Playboy* magazines with their monthly illustration, and the work of Patrick Nagel, of J. C. and Franz Leyendecker. You can see Leyendecker's influence in the flesh-colored slashes of paint across the man's neck in the portrait from 2010. Sousa says, "I've always been influenced by illustration, photography, and fashion magazines as much as by fine art. I think it's good to have sources coming from all directions."

When Sousa moved to Provincetown in late 2002, he had already spent time here. "It was a place where I could see a lot of art happening," he remembers. "It is encouraged to be an artist here." After the shock of September 11th, he decided he had to act on his long-buried desire to be a painter. He had always liked to draw, and he had taken basic art in high school, but had no training beyond that. He simply wanted to be a painter: it was a calling. Growing up in southeastern Massachusetts, however, had not offered a lot of role models in that way: "I needed to be someplace where I wasn't going to be discouraged."

In addition to working at the Watership Inn when he first came to Provincetown, Sousa began modeling for local life-drawing groups. He was able to ask questions of the artists, to develop understanding and expertise. Eventually, he modeled for a group organized by Rob Adamcik and Larry Collins. "Chris was an extraordinary model," Collins remembers. "Never moved. Never talked. Everybody loved it when he would model." Collins hired Sousa to work in his fine art gallery on Commercial Street, and soon he had taken on a larger influence in Sousa's career as an artist.

"Larry was the first person," Sousa recalls, "the first artist I ever met who told me, you can do this if you want. He was always trying to reinforce for me that you can go further than you think you can." Collins, a well-known and accomplished artist whose career was surveyed by the PAAM in 2010, remembers growing up in Oklahoma, where his high-school art teacher recognized his talent and did much to support him, get him into college, give him a sense of the possibility of himself as an artist, right down to the stretching of the canvas.

Sousa's reticence, his reluctance to put himself forward, was familiar to Collins. "In the beginning, he reminded me of myself in many ways," he remembers. "That's part of what really made me take a great interest in him." Collins understood that Sousa made art, but only after the younger man asked Collins for advice did they begin to discuss the work: "He brought in a picture that was done from a photograph. The paint was very thick, impasto—a very nice little picture."

Collins gave him some advice to help him develop his talents: he told Sousa to go back to the canvas, to do more, to do better. The painting, left on the floor of the shop, sold within a day. "It makes me feel good to know that I've maybe helped him in some ways," Collins says, "just by being around or a good example. I had mentors in my life, and they didn't stand around and tell me how to paint. Sometimes they bought my clothes, sometimes they gave me jobs."

Sousa remembers Collins's support: "Larry always said, I hate the word *should*. He offered encouragement, specifics for drawing. He would say, here's a book to help you draw arms." Collins emphasized traditional methods of learning and making art: becoming a skilled draftsman and learning to work with live models formed a basis for his process. He is also passionate about the history of art, lending freely from his personal library, collected over a lifetime. He would often talk with Sousa about the greats: "These are your heroes . . . you try to be as good as they are. You try to be one of them."



Like Any Other Day, 2015, oil on canvas, 36 by 24 inches

As opportunities to show work increased, Sousa gave more thought to what connected individual works. For instance, he had been influenced by a book of E. J. Bellocq's photographs of prostitutes in the Storyville neighborhood of turn-of-the-century New Orleans. The women are posed, sometimes bare breasted, but often dressed in corsets and pantalets; sometimes they are standing in front of a sheet hung on a wire, or against a blank wall, or figured wallpaper. Some have their faces scratched off of the photographic plate due to a fear of identification. They have a few objects around them: photos, pillows, a bottle of something.

These portraits fascinated Sousa. They are revealing and intimate—the women are sometimes relaxed, at ease, but they can also seem guarded and tragic. The overriding feeling of the images is the vulnerability of these women—in their dress, their manner, what we imagine of their circumstances. The sense of danger lurks just outside the frame. Like the mood of ominous strangeness in de Chirico's work, these Bellocq portraits hit a chord with Sousa, creating another element in the mix of his developing work.

"So I started thinking about what the counterpoint to a corset might be," Sousa remembers. "Maybe a top hat or suspenders. I began to assemble these props." The props found their way into the paintings. Only a few items in each painting, but there is a strange dissonance between them—in that glaring light surrounded by such deep shadows, these objects take on energy, a mystery that is designed. There seems to be a riddle posed somewhere between the figure and the objects he handles.

Adam and Marian Peck, who represent Sousa at the A Gallery in Provincetown, feel that pull of mystery in the work. Adam Peck, an artist with an eponymous gallery in the West End, first noticed Sousa's work at Scott Coffey's CoffeyMen clothing store. When he and his wife determined to open a gallery showing the work of other artists at 192 Commercial Street, Sousa was one of the first they approached. According to Peck: "Sousa has this amazing capacity to put on canvas an image that in anybody else's hands would either be erotic or sexually charged—and not necessarily in a good way. But in Chris's hands, these are such intimate explorations of *you*—this is you on the canvas. This is what brings the viewer in so close, that these images are utterly vulnerable."

That solitary figure is not just the influence of artists such as Bellocq, but resonates with Sousa himself. The reason we can see ourselves in each one is because the artist in some way has translated a part of himself into the personality behind the mask of each figure that he paints. Peck continues, "For someone who reveals nothing, Chris's work is almost embarrassingly revealing. I think that is the connection. It is honesty, it is the revealing quality of it, it is so genuine."

Collins sees that honesty in the work, too—the organic development of Sousa's subject. "The thrust is not erotic," he explains, "it is more psychological. Eroticism is right on top, but in his work, there is something else that he is expressing. It's not laid out, it's not obvious. It's mysterious. He's creating something that is his own, and if you see some of his early photographic studies, that same eye, that same mind is in the paintings."

Sousa grew up in Taunton, Massachusetts, only a couple hours' drive from Provincetown. At that time, Taunton was a mill town, particularly strong in silversmithing—the last of these companies, Reed & Barton, recently stopped operations. It has been a long, slow bleed for places like Taunton. Sousa's friend and writer Stephen Desroches grew up in Taunton as well, and, like Sousa, he has struggled with balancing the need to pay the rent and his dedication to a craft. Desroches and Sousa lived and worked together at the Watership when they first arrived in Provincetown, and they later shared an East End apartment with musician Rod Vaughan. Desroches described their communal space as a "creative hive."

Desroches went to the same schools as Sousa and spent time at the same library, although he was a few years behind his older friend. "Being from this mini-New England rust belt," Desroches explains, "there is melancholy to life there, but, just looking around, almost a beautiful one. I don't see Chris's paintings as erotic. They're more revelatory. There is a vulnerability to them. All of his paintings to me have a sinister element that seems to come back to where we are from, surrounded by these monuments to the past—empty factories, neighborhoods of immigrants."

Sousa is aware of that darkness and resists the urge to make his work really dark. He explains that

he was a loner as a child, and that he still spends a lot of time alone: "I can see how Taunton probably influenced me. Growing up as a teenager, I could tell that it had seen its heyday come and go, and was a very depressed area. When you are a kid, you are not even aware of how it is affecting you. These are my circumstances."

That darkness in the Bellocq portraits that so fascinated Sousa is refashioned in his paintings. That darkness from his youth, his childhood, from the sense of place, finds itself translated through his experience in these works depicting young men facing the viewers, often looking right into the eyes of the viewers, connecting with them, baring themselves to the viewers, challenging them. Friend or foe? Lover or hater? Whatever the source for that throb of darkness in the work, whatever the experience that drives that sense of haunting, Sousa has not allowed himself to be consumed by it. He has found a symbiosis with it that has resulted in these melancholy, exposed, sometimes sinister, always intriguing portraits.

By the end of our interview, Sousa has packed and shipped twelve paintings to the Woodman/Shimko Gallery. The show will open on March 20, and, eventually, he will hear how it goes. In the meantime, he works two days a week at Three Custom Color Specialists on Shank Painter Road

mixing makeup. He paints every day. He goes to the gym. He casts a wide net for learning. Recently, he spent time in New York City visiting galleries and museums and taking classes at the Art Students League, where many of Provincetown's storied painters have studied.

He is experimenting with new work, too. The figure remains, sometimes now in grisaille, or delineated in a thick impasto. The young man still holds strange objects, but now he floats on bands of color or a field of geometric color planes. A quadrant dissolves into blue sky and white clouds limned with that same intense light. "My color palette has shifted," he says, in the midst of a bitterly cold, snow-buried winter. "I always gravitated toward these drab colors. Then, this off-season, I began working in grisaille, and now I'm working in brighter, bolder colors. Inviting in some sunlight."

"I'm still learning," he explains. "I'm still paying my dues. I want to pursue this as far as I can, to be able to do it whether I am making money at it or if I have to make my money in a different way. I'm an artist now. I want to keep learning, keep progressing." ▲

TAYLOR M. POLITES is a writer and maker living in Providence, Rhode Island, with his small Chihuahua, Clovis. Polites's first novel, *The Rebel Wife*, was published by Simon & Schuster in 2012. His articles, essays, and short stories have appeared in a variety of anthologies, magazines, and news publications.

There Was Always a Place to Crash: Al Kaplan's Provincetown 1962-1966
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Activist and historian Josephine Del Deo addresses Provincetown's 1963 Hiroshima Day Memorial Walk.

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Photographing the Sixties

By Rowland Scherman

In 1961 Rowland Scherman became the first photographer for the Peace Corps, documenting the work of volunteers all over the world. His photos helped define the image of the agency we know today.

He became a freelance photographer in 1963 and photographed many of the iconic musical, cultural, and political events of the '60s, including the 1963 Newport Folk Festival; the March on Washington, DC; the Beatles' first US concert; and

Woodstock. He traveled with Bobby Kennedy on his campaign for the presidency, went on tour with Judy Collins, was in the studio when Crosby, Stills, and Nash recorded their first album. In 1968, he won a Grammy Award for the cover photo of Bob Dylan's Greatest Hits.

His photographs have appeared in many publications, including LIFE, Look, National Geographic, TIME, Paris Match, and Playboy.



ROBERT F. KENNEDY

I was doing a photographic essay on the presidential campaign of Robert F. Kennedy in 1968 for *LIFE* magazine. I had terrific access and the pictures became among the best I have ever done. I was editing the story back in Washington, DC, when I heard that he had been killed. This work hasn't been published because the man who inspired it was erased, as America sometimes erases her heroes. RFK would have been among the great presidents, had he lived.



A. PHILIP RANDOLPH EDITH LEE-PAYNE

I was lucky to be the official photographer for the March on Washington in August 1963. What is it like when your first assignment turns out to be one of the most important events in US history? I was to find out. I have

become most proud of these two images. One is of A. Philip Randolph, the architect and driving force of the march, looking out over the huge crowd of Americans who gathered to end racism. It seems to me that the epoch-making experiences of his life are reflected in his face and in his eyes, which have seen so much. In the crowd was twelve-year-old Edith Lee-Payne, listening intently to Martin Luther King's speech. This photograph has become an iconic addition to the Smithsonian Museum and the National Archives.





THE BEATLES, 1964

The Beatles played the *Ed Sullivan Show*, and then they took the train down to DC. That's where I lived at the time, that's where my career started, thanks to JFK and the Peace Corps. So when they showed up in DC, my sister Betsy was assisting a photographer, and she said, "You'd better come see these guys," so I did.

I didn't have a ticket or a press pass or anything. I was just starting out, and I was shooting pictures from way, way, way back in the wings. But I got a little closer and nobody stopped me . . . and then I got a little closer, still nobody stopped me. I was running out of film, and pretty soon I had my elbows on the stage and I was right next to them blasting away with the few frames I had left. I got some pretty good stuff of these guys. The young Beatles. The kids, who had become fans overnight, were going nuts. Later, at a reception for the Fab Four in the British embassy, the wives of the ambassadors were going just as nuts as the kids. In time, we all realized it wasn't just hype—their music will live on.

JUDY COLLINS AND JONI MITCHELL

On another *LIFE* assignment in 1969, I toured with Judy Collins at the time of her great hit "Both Sides, Now," written by Joni Mitchell before she became a great star in her own right as a performer. This shot was made in a treehouse behind Joni's Laurel Canyon bungalow. I implored them to climb up with their guitars, and all three of us are now glad they did.



JOAN BAEZ AND BOB DYLAN

Joan Baez and Bob Dylan at the March on Washington. They look like two kids harmonizing in the backyard somewhere. But there were at least 250,000 listeners out there on the Mall. This shot also testifies to the amazing access I had on that day—"f/8 and be there," indeed!

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HOWARD HODGKIN

Painter Howard Hodgkin in his studio near Bath, England, in 1974. I was a freelancer (and a sheep-herder) living in Wales at the time. Later, Howard became Sir Howard due to the worldwide acclaim and success for his abstract art.



DAVID HOCKNEY

Another British artist who made good: Davis Hockney in 1972. I love the painterly colors in this photograph. It makes me really miss Polaroid film.



DIANA VREELAND

Diana Vreeland was the editor of *Vogue*, the queen of American fashion taste, and *LIFE* wanted to do a story on her. The story never ran, as Ms. Vreeland had veto rights. I don't know why she didn't want the pictures published—I think she looked great, and so did the *New Yorker*, who ran another of my pictures of her, full page, after she had died.



LANGSTON HUGHES



HARRY BELAFONTE



SAMMY DAVIS, JR.



BARBARA WALTERS

The Barbara Walters “close-up” was the most fun. I got to hang out with her in New York for a week or so, and although I had to get up at 4 a.m. on most days—as Barbara was the new anchor on the *Today* show—the rewards were worth it because of her wit and energy and spirit. The camera liked her, of course; but she was a pro on both sides of the camera and it was an education watching her work. And *LIFE* liked the pictures, too. And she was funny! If the Marx Brothers had had a sister, it might have been Barbara Walters.



John Yau

THE ART OF ASKING QUESTIONS

By Christopher Busa

BORN JUST NORTH OF BOSTON in 1950, John Yau grew up in a household where his immigrant parents spoke Chinese to each other, though he never learned it himself. He wrote in the poem “Ing Grish”:

I do not know Ing Grish, but I will study it down to its
black and broken bones. . .

I do not know Chinese because my mother said that I refused to learn it
from the moment I was born, and that my refusal
was one of the greatest sorrows of her life . . .

I do know English and I know that knowing it means
that I don't always believe it. . .

Anguish is a language everyone can speak, but no one listens to it.

And thus, he was gifted with the central theme of his future career, a journey into an interpretation of words, seeking and communicating meaning through what is said, mis-said, unsaid, dreamed. The author of over fifty books of poetry, artists' books, fiction, and art criticism, Yau writes poetry that explores identity through an examination of language, and he explores nonverbal mediums as well; he has become a leading commentator on contemporary art, exploring how the mute image becomes articulate when the viewer voices her or his experience of viewing.

Physical trauma in his early years also shaped Yau's literary sensibility: during his senior year at Bard College, he was traumatized by a serious car accident, which left him hospitalized for eight months and led to future surgeries. He acquired a distinctive limp during this forced respite, which also seemed to increase the agility of his nimble mind. Following his graduation from Bard College, where he had gone to study with Robert Kelly, and after living in Cambridge and recuperating from his accident, Yau moved to New York, spending the summer holed up in the great rooms of the New York Public Library reading on microfiche everything the poet John Ashbery, another profound influence, wrote about art for the *New York Herald Tribune*, which, while he lived in Paris, Ashbery had worked for as an expatriate columnist. Yau was also inspired by the writings on art by other New York School poets, such as Frank O'Hara, James Schuyler, and Barbara Guest.

In the fall of 1975, Yau enrolled at Brooklyn College and studied for a master's degree in creative writing, taking courses with Ashbery. The next year, Yau published his first collection of verse, *Crossing Canal Street*, in which, without sentimentality, he portrayed contemporary Chinatown, the largest concentration of Chinese people in the Western Hemisphere.

During an interview in his art- and book-filled apartment in New York, Yau told me that he began writing art criticism “because, on a very basic level, I thought it would teach me how to write. Over the last thirty years, this has changed. Received wisdom dominates the art world. Slowly, I've developed an argument with



Author photo, *In the Realm of Appearances: The Art of Andy Warhol*, 1993
PHOTO BY MICHAEL STELLA



John Yau engaging with an audience member at a talk he and Brenda Goodman gave during her show at the Life on Mars gallery, Bushwick, New York, 2015 PHOTO BY PHIL SMITH

how things seem. Warhol said he painted Coca-Cola because everybody drank Coca-Cola, even the Queen of England, which is deeply assimilationist. While everybody drank Coca-Cola, not everybody could drink it in Buckingham Palace or in a diner in the segregated South. Perhaps the poetry world is as accepting of innovation as the art world, yet much of the poetry world is stuck in English departments, where, for the most part, the only kind of poet they like is one who is dead.

"I like to collaborate with visual artists, such as Thomas Nozkowski in *Ing Grish*, because they set parameters that as a poet you might not get to. I'm now working with a young artist named Charles Webster, an abstract artist, and I thought I would get the things that he makes to be the speakers in the poem. I would not have thought of that unless I had the images in front of me."

In his overflowing apartment in Lower Manhattan, Yau lives with his wife, the artist Eve Aschheim, and their grade-school daughter Cerise, who putters around the room while we talk. Among the many paintings flowing along the high walls, salon-style, are the striking drawings of Aschheim, who concentrates on the linear markings that, in painting, serve to outline contours of images. Yau included Aschheim's work for an exhibition of five artists that he curated in 2013 for the University of Hartford, *LINES + SPACES*.

In 1977, not long after moving to New York, Yau discovered that he had become obsessed with the art of Jasper Johns, who had a mammoth exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art that fall and winter—over two hundred large paintings, sculptures, graphics, and drawings, surveying twenty years of work, from 1955 to 1976. On view were the large seminal paintings, such as *Flag* (1954–1955), the iconic symbol of America, which is not a flag, but rather a painting of a flag. Johns might have titled his painting *This Is Not a Flag*—even though the flag is the symbol of our country, Johns's painting, anticipating Pop Art before Pop emerged, offered an astute and novel function for representation during the very apex of Abstract Expressionism.

With Duchampian impishness, Johns seized on the idea for his *Painted Bronze (Ale Cans)* (1960), two bronze cylinders hand-painted with the logo of Ballantine Ale. Leo Castelli, of Castelli Gallery, sold them immediately. Yau explicates differences in the two "cans," one of which is punctured by a church key, the other apparently sealed and unopened. Brilliantly, Yau, in *In the Realm of Appearances: The Art of Andy Warhol* (1993)—something of a companion book to his two widely praised books on Johns, *The United States of Jasper Johns* (1993) and *A Thing Among Things: The Art of Jasper Johns* (2008)—compares Johns's sculpture with a dual image by Andy Warhol, *Before and After 3* (1962). The comparison is apt and keenly instructive. As Johns's beer cans depict after and before, Warhol's depicts a similar progression in the visage of a woman, taken from a newspaper advertisement, before and after plastic surgery, her ill-proportioned hooked nose transformed into a smooth ski slope of parabolic grace. Drawing out the differences between the work of Johns and Warhol, Yau observes that their juxtaposition shows the pause between what has been finished and what has not yet begun, concluding that Johns's sculpture proposes an "investigation into time," representing the state of *during*, while Warhol merely investigates the before and after.

These questions were first raised in the twentieth century when Marcel Duchamp began showing his "ready-mades," such as his porcelain urinal, reversing its top and bottom for display, not as in a store showroom, but for exhibition in a gallery as a work of art. Thus, a functional object was offered as art, presenting a secondhand experience from a fresh perspective, transforming the familiar into an uncanny, original experience. Yau suggests that Duchamp offered avenues for divergent directions in the way viewers frame their perceptions, obliging us to consider the relationship between what a thing is and what it looks like: "Duchamp's work makes us aware of a choice: Either we live in the world of appearances or we plunge into the realm of experience."

Andy Warhol began his career as a commercial artist, making drawings and watercolors of retail products, such as shoes, which were reproduced in large-circulation publications such as *LIFE* and *Glamour*. Yau points out that, like Norman Rockwell, whose paintings became famous when they were reproduced in magazines, Warhol took a revolutionary cue in achieving commercial prominence: "By 1962, when [Warhol] began using silkscreened images in his work, he completed a reversal. The reproduction became a painting." Yet, Yau



Jasper Johns, *Painted Bronze (Ale Cans)*, 1960, oil on bronze, 5½ by 8 by 4¾ inches
MUSEUM LUOWIG, COLOGNE, GERMANY



Andy Warhol, *Before and After 3*, 1962, synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 72 by 99½ inches
WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, NEW YORK

wondered, “Are Warhol’s paintings truly universal or are they sufficiently artistic? Did he reveal the emptiness at the core of consumer society or is he celebrating its legitimatizing power? Is he addressing something common to us all or is he perpetuating certain myths embedded in the fabric of culture?” The tension between the questions raised by Yau and our responses is the source of the animating power of the art he discusses.

Genuine inquiry begins with the examination of the available, which is one reason Yau was attracted to the aesthetics of Johns and Warhol, both of whom, in different ways, were less interested in creating new imagery than penetrating more deeply into things already around us. In his enigmatic manner—the so-called “Johnsonian conversation,” which has troubled critics who have tried to nail down just what Johns means in conversations with others—the artist has offered, “I’m interested in things that suggest the world rather than suggest the personality. I’m interested in things that *are*, rather than in judgments.” Yau discusses how Johns, during the ’60s, modified the fully closed circuits of his targets by abutting a side of the circle to the edge of the painting, “i.e., the world. Johns connected his evidence of time’s irreversibility to actual time.”

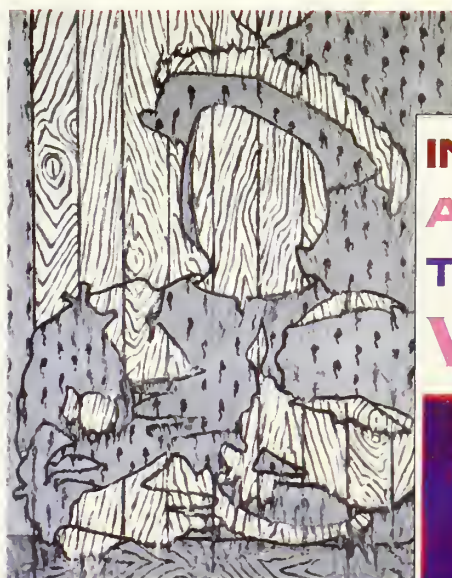
Johns said famously that he was inspired to paint his first work representing the American flag by a dream he had of painting the flag. The next morning, he got up, bought materials, and started painting. For his canvas, he used his bedsheet, then fashioned three rectangles, one for the blue field of white stars, another for the red and white stripes to its immediate right, and the last for the rest of the thirteen stripes. These rectangles were affixed to a plywood backing, and Johns used melted wax to embed bits of newspaper into the lumpy surface.

Some scraps of words, not visible in reproductions of *Flag* (1955), are discernible in front of the actual work. The chatter of everyday talk has become the matrix for the symbol of our country, and, as a symbol, the flag may represent an ideal, and not an actual fact, that the states are united. One bit of language that is clear, even prominent, is the phrase “Pipe Dream,” just beneath the blue canton. The phrase originated in Turkey to describe the kind of fantasy induced by smoking opium in a pipe, and perhaps it is true that the dream of uniting our very separate states is a fantasy we share. Johns further explored this concept with his iconic “maps” of the United States, showing in stenciled letters abbreviations for states.

Just as our nation’s states are surrounded by water, so our daily life is engulfed in the oceanic experience of dreaming. Yau observes that in *Flag*, Johns was trying less to represent the flag than to convey the state of dreaming he experienced when he painted the flag. This perspective offers Yau the opportunity to raise novel psychological and philosophical questions not ordinarily available to art criticism. Yau argues that Johns’s definition of seeing includes dreaming:

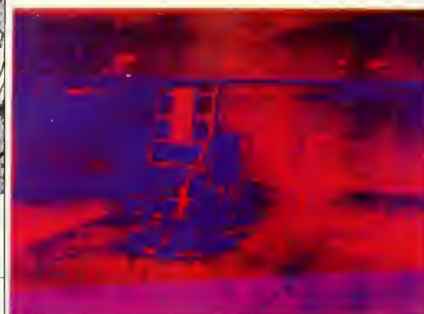


The United States of Jasper Johns



An Essay by John Yau

**INTHEREALMOF
APPEARANCES
THEARTOFANDY
WARHOL**



JOHN YAU



the ocular perception of “seeing” while dreaming challenges our waking experience of a stable figure and ground orientation. In dreaming, negative space disappears, blending subject and situation into an all-positive continuity.

Yau points out that in very different points in Johns’s career, the artist incorporated motifs in which figure and ground are indivisible. The bathtub in his home becomes a place for meditation on the un-homelike. The landmass of the United States blends with the oceans that engulf it. The painterly crosshatch patterns evolve into hard-edged colored diamond patterns. The layering of a thing within a thing is an incubation of an ideal within its own physical expression. Yau cites the succinct koan posed by the Chinese philosopher Chuang Tzu, who dreamed he was a butterfly, happy in that transformation, but when he awoke as himself, he was uncertain if he had dreamed of the butterfly or if the butterfly had dreamed of him.

Yau brings into our visual awareness issues seldom pondered in painting. Certainly, if time, as Henri Bergson said, is what keeps everything from happening all at once, then how does a static image represent temporality, motion, or narrative sequencing? When Yau was a graduate student at Brooklyn College, his teacher, Jack Flam, editor of *Matisse on Art*, referred to Bergson in his examination of Matisse’s *The Red Studio* (1911), depicting the sanctum sanctorum that is an artist’s private space for creative work. The room is painted in a very deep, dark red, with brightened outlines of whitish, X-ray-like skeletal sketches of many of the artist’s works in progress. Matisse’s painting, Yau said, is about “time becoming.” Yau refers also to a well-known Warhol painting of a suicide in which we see the figure in the air just after she has jumped from a window, but not yet landed. The image implies that our lives are surrounded by lacunae; the artists Yau admires attempt to provide meaning for our lives by placing them into larger contexts.

If Yau brings in time, especially in his books on Johns, he also brings in eating and dreaming—two other key experiences of not-knowingness. He introduces the idea that the artist is more than an eyeball expert, connecting his thoughts and involuntary appetites to what can be visually expressed. If poetry is the language of languages, then it may be capable of voicing the muteness of visual art. It is the most useful way to escape abstract, academic categories via parabolic speech, creating for the reader what the image is doing through the personal experience of one’s own reaction. In his first years in New York, Yau read a lot of James Agee’s film criticism and Edwin Denby’s dance writing, realizing that there was a whole tradition in America of poets and writers writing about something other than their own practice, and that this tradition existed outside the canon. Poets like O’Hara and Ashbery are not recognized for their writing on visual art. Weldon Kees is another example. Yau cites a film review by Agee that begins: “It was like



Luca Del Baldo, *John Yau*, 2014; (left) Glimpses of John Yau’s home
PHOTOS BY PHIL SMITH

Yau argues that Johns’s definition of seeing includes dreaming: the ocular perception of “seeing” while dreaming challenges our waking experience of a stable figure and ground orientation. In dreaming, negative space disappears, blending subject and situation into an all-positive continuity.

drinking cup after cup of weak orange pekoe tea.” He feels that there is a belle-lettrist tradition that Ashbery and O’Hara inherited from Agee, Kees, Virgil Thompson, and Edwin Denby, who once described costumes of dancers as clashing, “all wrong, like going to a department-store tie bin after a Christmas sale.” This writing offers an opportunity to relate aesthetics to everyday activity.

For Yau, experience is all. With the title of his second book on Johns, *A Thing Among Things*, inevitably we have to bring up the concept of “the thing in itself,” postulated by Immanuel Kant in *The Critique of Pure Reason*. Philosophers since Plato have wondered about ideal forms, forms that exist as ideas preceding our experience of forms in the world. Kant said, yes, we do have ideas we are born with, but they only come into being at the occasion of experience. Kant called this “thing in itself” a “noumenon,” contrasting it with a phenomenon encountered in experience. Yau understood that, when he looked at a work of art, he transcended the mute helplessness of an object by incorporating his own thoughts, feelings, and evaluations. His aesthetic edifice developed a philosophical and psychological foundation. Yau summoned Freud’s topography of the human mind to find language for dividing the traditional dualism of the mind and body into the tripartite territory of id, ego, and superego, with only one fully conscious part trying to govern parts unknown.

Yau’s criticism connects directly to his poetry. In *Ing Grish*, his collections of poems published in 2005 in collaboration with the maze-like,

About John Yau

BY BARRY SCHWABSKY

IN SOME WAY I would like this to be a poem about John Yau. It would be a poem in the sense articulated in some words I read recently, words that John himself quoted from the poet and translator Sawako Nakayasu, who said—John says—“I work mostly in poetry because it claims to be neither fiction nor nonfiction, because it acknowledges the gap between what really was or is and what is said about it.” Reading these words moved me because, although I had thought before, wondered before, about the fact that we don’t usually impose the categories of fiction and nonfiction on words we call poetry, I had never previously understood the import of this fact; Nakayasu, while hardly saying anything about it, seeming simply to take note of it (as I thought I already had but now came to realize I had failed to do) manages to convey the reason it is so crucial that a poem is neither fiction nor nonfiction: For all the beauty and force and accuracy we may sometimes give to our words, there is an irreducible gap between them and whatever it is we mean the words to be about. The words are what we call a poem when the beauty and the force and the accuracy of them seem to be, not so much in the strenuous and unending efforts we make to diminish that gap between the words and what they are about, as in the lucidity with which our words acknowledge and, as it were, frame that gap.

So I would like this, in some way, to be a poem about John Yau. And that’s despite the fact that I am not, this time, going to talk about him as a poet, though a poet is what he is first and last. And I also intend that not this time but some other I will speak of him as an editor, a publisher, a teacher, a talker, a friend—I don’t just mean my friend, though he is, any more than when I say “talker” I mean someone who talks to me; as I mean someone in whose nature it is to converse, so I mean someone in whose nature it is to be a friend. I could also, but not now, speak of him as a bibliophile and even an art collector, though not in the sense that someone who appears on the *ARTnews* list of “Fifty Most Important Art Collectors” is an art collector—he is more like a rescuer of artworks as he is of books and sometimes of people. “To a book collector,” as Walter Benjamin reminds us, “the true freedom of all books is somewhere on his shelves.” We can run through the variations: “To an art collector . . . on his walls.” “To a cultivator of friendship . . . around his table.” And perhaps I can also add, “To a critic . . . in his interpretation.”

That’s why I would like this to be a poem, in some way, about John Yau, and in particular about his way of being a critic, however much there would also be to say about him as an editor, a publisher, a teacher, a talker, a friend, a bibliophile, an art collector, or first and last a poet. Because as a critic he takes things that he’s found “lonely and abandoned on the market place” (again, the words are Benjamin’s) and offered them a kind of freedom in his thoughts, in his interpretation. And he offers this freedom not only to the things he loves but even to the things that he hates. (But wait: My daughter’s fourth-grade teacher trained his pupils never to use the word *hate*. They were rigorously required by him always to substitute the word *loathe*. Actually it’s not a bad idea.

So let me revise what I just wrote: And he offers this freedom not only to the things he loves but even to the things that he loathes.) But let me set aside the things that he loathes for now—I’ll come back to them later—in favor of those he loves.

I would like this to be a poem about John Yau, in some way, but not only about John but about anyone who, like him, loves change, who loves it when someone who is already on to a good thing tries to shake it up, see what that good thing can turn into. It’s a restless, Faustian love, I know—remember Faust’s words to Mephistopheles as they strike their bargain: “If to the moment I should say: / Linger on, thou art so fair! / Then bind me in chains, / Then I will gladly perish!” If death is the only alternative to change, it’s no wonder that, “In an age of signature gestures and stylistic branding, artists who change and, more importantly, are able to expand the possibilities of their work are few and far between.” I borrowed that line from John’s response to a recent show by Steve DiBenedetto, a review that reminded me of everything I like about art criticism. John writes of one of DiBenedetto’s paintings that its “structure seems energized, as if some unseen current is flowing through it,” and I immediately recognize that the same thing is true of his writing about it, and then furthermore that I feel something similar happening to myself as I read it. This unseen current just keeps flowing. It passes from one to another. But what happens when this current fizzles out or blows up in a flash of transient sparks, wasting away in a dead spectacle? That’s when change is no longer a matter of exploration but of what John calls *assimilation*, a way of grasping at status by imitating those who already have it. This impulse toward assimilation is the one he finds in the work of artists like Jeff Koons, which teaches, in John’s reading, that “to be out of the mainstream is in fact a mark of imperfection, and that you must be willing to do anything necessary to be embraced by the white middle class.”

I would like this to be a poem about John Yau and in praise of how his resistance against the pull toward assimilation is a declaration of freedom—not a freedom from the feelings of inadequacy and vulnerability that can potentially lead anyone to “self-hatred, as well as obeisance to a soul-destroying ideal” but the freedom to understand those feelings in order, not just to assuage them, but to avoid being manipulated by means of them. There is always a gap between what we are and what can be said about us. That’s why there’s an aspect of the human being that can only be addressed through a poetry that finds its force and beauty and accuracy in acknowledging the gap between what we are and what is said. And although this has not turned out to be the poem I would have liked to write about John Yau, at least I can think that in some way the gap has been acknowledged.

BARRY SCHWABSKY is art critic of the Nation. His recent publications include a collection of critical essays on art writing and art writers, Words for Art: Criticism, History, Theory, Practice (Sternberg Press, 2013) and a book of poetry, Trembling Hand Equilibrium (Black Square Editions, 2015).

meditation-inducing mandala images of the artist Thomas Nozkowski (who shows in Provincetown at the Schoolhouse Gallery), Yau confronts the inevitable tendency of contemporary speech to lose track of the historical meanings of its words, conflating disparate sources in a kind of pidgin English. The etymology of *pidgin* has several roots, one said to derive from the Chinese pronunciation of the English word *business*, which would indicate an origin in the needs of traders who did not share a common language. Another root originates with carrier pigeons, birds used for carrying brief written messages prior to modern communications. A pidgin language functions as a lingua franca, a simpler form of communication, the grammar taking shortcuts, such as employing basic vowels.

Punning, Yau writes of his own name: "I do not know Ang Grish, but I can tell you that my last name / consists of three letters, and that technically all of them are vowels . . ." He reveals a secret of his own identity: "The authority on poetry announced that I discovered that I was Chinese / when it was to my advantage to do so." He mixes *Ing* and *Ang* because he does "not know either Cantonese or English, Ang Glish or Ing Grish." Yau's art is, paradoxically, an effort to reduce language for the purpose of expanding its possibilities.

Borrowed Love Poems, published in 2002, features on its cover a painting by Jasper Johns, *Untitled* (1998), an encaustic on canvas with embedded objects. The painting is essentially three vertical panels with a string-like line traversing the panels from the upper left to the lower right, as if to unite the figuration of one panel with the harlequin/diamond pattern of its adjacent panel. The string-like line signals Johns's later use of what he called "catenary" devices to create reliefs that cast shadows on his flat surfaces. Echoing Johns's practice of using available motifs instead of creating original images, Yau introduces his poems with an epistle by the Russian poet Osip Mandelstam: "What I am saying at this moment is not being said by me."

The concept of a love that is "borrowed" is Yau's core theme, most emphatically embodied in two poems, both titled "830 Fireplace Road," in tribute to Jackson Pollock. Yau takes us into Pollock's studio at this address in East Hampton, to the scene of the artist "dancing," flowing paint from the end of a stick, letting it fly without the use of a brush. The poems are structured around a published statement by Pollock: "When I am *in* my painting, I'm not aware of what I'm doing." Yau offers variations that examine Pollock's meaning, much like a sculptor attempting to finish a three-dimensional work while being obliged to work on only one perspective at a time. Yau walks around Pollock's sentence:

When painting, I am in what I'm doing, not doing what I am. . . .

When painting, I'm not doing. I am in my doing.

In the second, longer poem, Yau speaks again as Pollock:

Because of making, the I has no I.

Because changes because. I have no the. . . .

I have no fear of because, no fear of destroying the I.

In Yau's most recent volume of poetry, *Further Adventures in Monochrome* (2012), the art critic delineates the issues of being in the moment and envisioning the ideal form by speaking as a poet: "I believe there is a secret relationship between pronouns." Like lovers in an illicit love affair, our refracted perspectives spy on each other:

My fundamental self is at war with my multiple personalities . . .

My multiple selves are at war with my fundamental personality

because one is never only one.

In another poem in this book, Yau suggests an explanation or predestination surrounding the birth of Yves Klein, the champion of blue:

Yves Klein was born because Baudelaire predicted this propitious event by naming colors, which, like all colors, escape the confines of their names, becoming more than an emanation of infinity. Even black can get away from its name, which is why Malevich had to surround it with white. But what is color that isn't surrounded by another color?

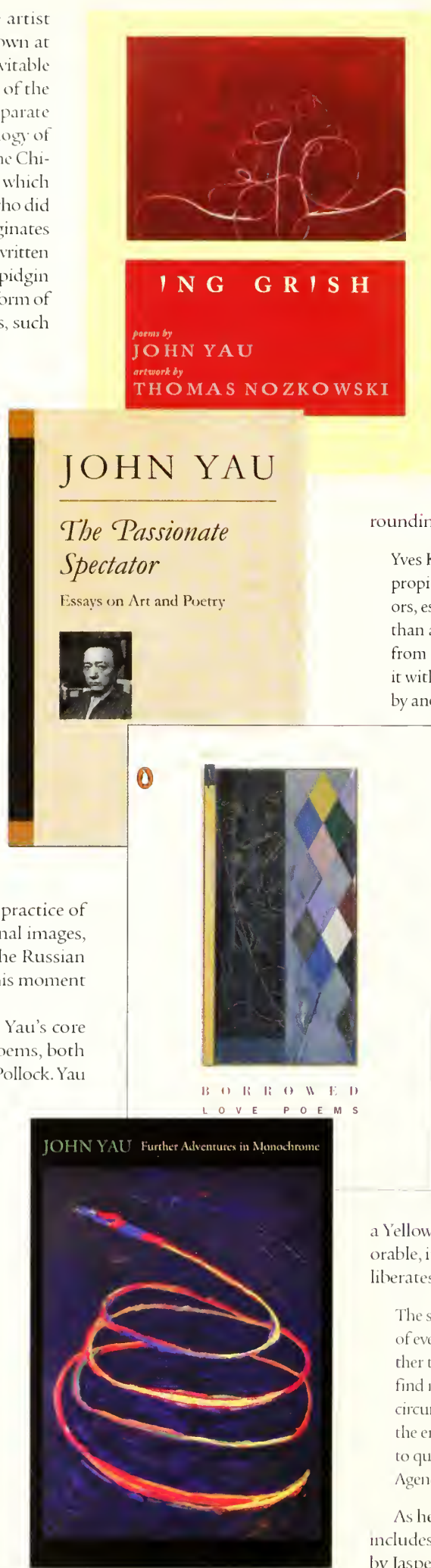
I am driven to wonder why we speak of things "taking place," as if an event were rooted in location. Yau sees this as "obscurity becoming visible," where "eternity is a place but infinity is an event." Yau leaves us with questions, not answers.

Exploring how prose can function as poetry, *Further Adventures in Monochrome* introduces a composite persona Yau calls "Genghis Chan, Private Eye," again punning on the word *I*. This alter ego functions to create a Chinese-American identity by "jamming together," Yau told me, the historical figure Genghis Khan—who brutally united many of the nomadic tribes of Northeast Asia and turned the Silk Road into an effective trade and communications corridor with the Middle East—and Charlie Chan, the popular noir detective in the American cinema of the 1930s and '40s. Chan was portrayed, in opposition to xenophobic fears of

a Yellow Peril, as intelligent, benevolent, heroic, and honorable, if not quite fluent in English. This fictional identity liberates Yau from himself:

The story is simple because it is not a story, but a chain of events in which you are a link. One afternoon, in neither the distant future nor the nearby past, I happen to find myself confronted by a series of largely unspeakable circumstances, all of which were indelibly marked by the entrances and exits of my shadow. Thus I am forced to quit my position at the White and Wong Detective Agency, and seek my fortune elsewhere.

As he had done in his earlier work on Pollock, Yau also includes a poem, "Ventriloquist," in which a key statement by Jasper Johns is utilized for reworked variations on the



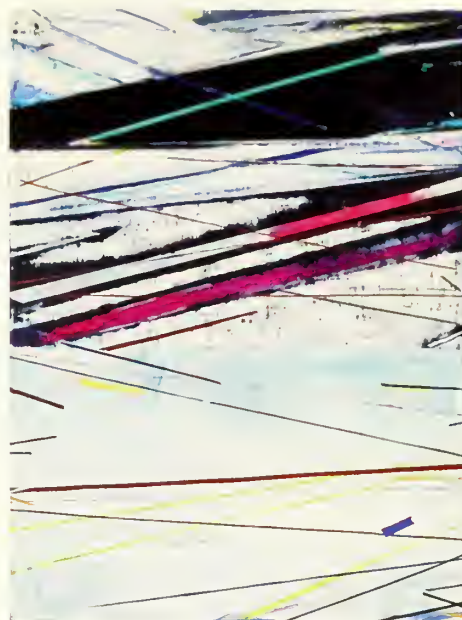
theme of “not knowing”—this time, not knowing the relation between a dream and the dreamer:

One night I dreamed that I got up the next morning
I went out, bought materials, and began to paint
The next night I dreamed that I began . . .

Among his voluminous writings on living artists, John Yau has written incisive précis of important Provincetown artists, including Richard Baker, Pat de Groot, Mary Frank, Jim Peters, Michael Mazur, Robert Motherwell, Paul Resika, Myron Stout, Bob Thompson, and Jack Tworkov. In 1983 he reviewed *Ten Fellowship Artists from the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown*, on the occasion of an exhibition in New York at the Marisa del Re Gallery. He spoke about how the Work Center was “akin to Plato’s Academy, despite the philosopher’s notorious misgivings about artists.” He noted that, in a time when everybody interesting seemed to be twenty-nine years old, the average age of the Work Center artists was twenty-nine and a half. Yau singled out a sculpture by Jim Peters that combined feathers, a photograph, paint, and wood, observing, “It’s a grimly humorous documentation of a contemporary Icarus as well as a comment on the aspirations underlying all artistic endeavors.”

Since the late 1980s, Yau has shared his unique perspective on art and art criticism, holding distinguished teaching positions at the Pratt Institute Graduate School of Art, the Maryland Institute College of Art, the School of Visual Arts in New York, Brown University, and the University of California at Berkeley. While in California, he was named the Ahmanson Curatorial Fellow at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles. He founded a small nonprofit press, Black Square Editions, in 1999, publishing experimental writing such as the poetry of Barry Schwabsky, who is the art critic for the *Nation* magazine. From 2007 to 2011, Yau was the arts editor for the lively *Brooklyn Rail*, leaving to found the online art magazine *Hyperallergic* with a collective of writers including Thomas Micchelli, Albert Mobilio, and Claudia La Rocco. Now he also teaches two days a week at the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University.

“I teach a graduate course and an undergraduate course,” he told me. “The undergraduate course is one year long in two semesters, a required course for art majors. I made up an art history class, which begins generally with Monet’s sources in Spain, Velázquez and Goya, asking students questions about what is modern painting. I show them films and introduce them to various things they may not know about. I get them to think about



Streak/shift, 2014, oil on canvas on panel, 16 by 12 inches COURTESY LORI BOOKSTEIN FINE ART

Eve Aschheim worked on modestly scaled canvases and panels—often no bigger than 17 by 14 inches—with an austere geometric vocabulary. This consists largely of elements ranging from small, non-repeating vertical dashes to surging clusters of sharply angled lines—the sum of which suggests a world in transition, where balance is precarious and fleeting.

John Yau writing about Eve Aschheim’s work in the catalogue for the 2013 exhibition *LINES + SPACES* at the University of Hartford.

how to write about art and how they see it. By the second semester, they go to Chelsea or the Lower East Side and write reviews of shows they’ve seen.”

One book on Yau’s syllabus is Charles Baudelaire’s *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*, with its stirring account of “The Passionate Spectator,” which Yau appropriated for the title of his 2006 collection of essays on art and poetry. In a discussion of Frank O’Hara’s art criticism, Yau ties in Baudelaire’s writings about an alert observer:

O’Hara looked at art from a very different vantage point, one that was less protected, more open. Instead of approaching art with a theory, whose primary purpose is to aid the critic in establishing a hierarchy of verifiable values, he lived as a *flâneur*, which means he tried to live in the now as completely as possible.

Yau includes Baudelaire’s account of this alert observer, who strolls through the turmoil of modern life, amid overwhelming urban unease, calmly claiming individual power to preserve his autonomy:

The crowd is his element, as the air is that of birds and water of fishes. His passions and his profession are to become one flesh with the crowd. For the perfect *flâneur*, for the passionate spectator, it is an immense joy to set up house in the heart of the multitude, amid the ebb and flow of movement, in the midst of the fugitive and infinite. To be away from home and yet to feel oneself everywhere at home; to see the world, to be at the center of the world, and yet to remain hidden from the world . . . impartial natures that the tongue can but clumsily define. . . . Or we might liken him to a mirror as vast as the crowd itself; or to a kaleidoscope gifted with consciousness, responding to each one of its movements and reproducing the multiplicity of life and the flickering grace of all the elements of life.

John Yau, living in “a world of transition,” is our time’s “passionate spectator.” ❧

CHRISTOPHER BUSA is editor of Provincetown Arts.



John Yau and Brenda Goodman during a discussion of Goodman’s show at the Life on Mars gallery, Bushwick, New York, 2015 PHOTO BY IRENE LIPTON

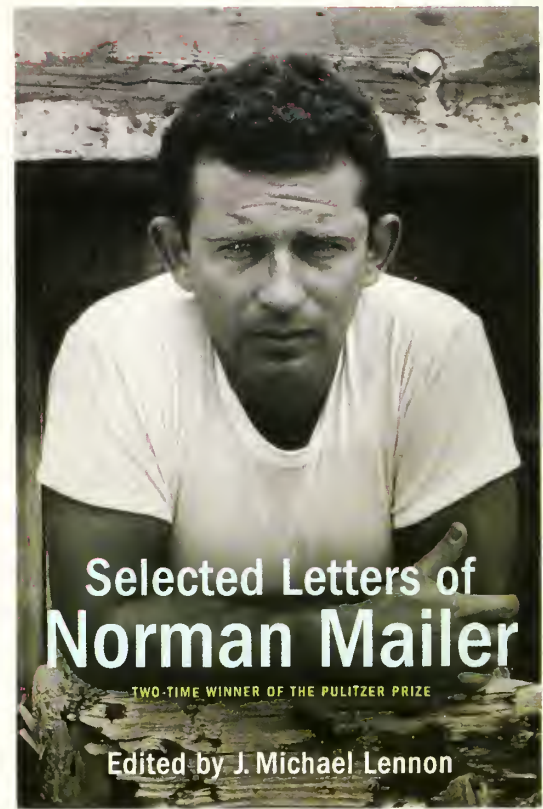
J. Michael Lennon and the Selected Letters of Norman Mailer

By Christopher Busa

AS J. MICHAEL LENNON shows in penetrating detail in his recent biography *Norman Mailer: A Double Life*, Mailer's imagination was not only dualistic but also dynamically dialectical—utilizing a natural inclination to oppose any proposition with its opposite in order to activate an unforeseen outcome, a dynamic that had a profound effect on his life and work. Mailer developed his own form of piston-powered existentialism that transcended that of God-denying European existentialists such as Jean-Paul Sartre. If the young Mailer proclaimed he was an atheist, the mature author came to believe that existence was much easier to understand if one postulated a creator—a revelation that dawned on him sometime in the midfifties as a consequence of heavy use of marijuana (which he referred to as “tea”), as revealed in the hundreds of numbered paragraphs of his yet-to-be-published *Lipton's Journal*.

Mailer was influenced by his mother's father, a Jewish scholar who introduced his grandson to the paradoxical thinking of Hasidism, which, Mailer wrote, “placed madness next to practicality, illumination side by side with duty, and arrogance in bed with humility.” Lennon comments, “Early and later, Mailer gravitated to incompatibles.”

Lennon has invested a lifetime in absorbing the work of Mailer, beginning with his unpublished doctoral dissertation, written while Lennon was a graduate student, which sprang from Mailer's early plan to “build a radical bridge from Marx to Freud, that is, from the interior world of dreams, obsessions, and fears, to the public world of production, consumption, and the added-value of work. I wanted to build a critical bridge between Mailer's fiction and nonfiction, to show their deep kinship, and explore the reasons for the shift.” Lennon sent the dissertation to Mailer, Mailer responded, and the Catholic scholar and the Jewish author slowly bonded as friends. Prior to writing the biography, Lennon published *Norman Mailer: Works and Days* (2000), a “bio-bibliography” chronicling Mailer's career, day by day, revealing connections between Mailer's daily life and his written work. Its aim, Lennon said, was “to nominate, delineate, annotate, and cross-reference every significant utterance in print, as well as the chief events of his life.” This research prepared him to write the biography, published in 2013, and edit the *Selected Letters of Norman Mailer*, which was published last year by Random House.



The letters thrill Lennon: “We have the original moment of inspiration where he is bringing all his intelligence to bear on the act of composition. Many carbons have postscripts on them. I don't know any writer who offers more direct knowledge of the process of composition. His novels say nothing about it. He goes in a room and comes out with a book. But with the letters, we are there in his writing studio.”

To cope with the monthly onslaught of correspondence, which accumulated until the stack grew so high it swayed as he passed by, Mailer began to dictate his letters, numbering them, say, from one to sixty. He would speak into a tape recorder, his secretary would transcribe the tapes, and then Mailer would sign them. At the University of Texas in Austin, where Mailer's archive resides, Lennon listened to actual tapes, marveling how the author would approach this disagreeable duty with all the enthusiasm of a long-distance runner who, having completed a marathon, was now obliged to stride again around the course he thought completed. Inevitably, Mailer, out of respect for family, friends, and fellow writers, famous or obscure, warmed to the occasion. Lennon notes, “His method was to mutter and utter,” revising false starts until he was able to make “every syllable achieve a cadence as natural as a pulse, with the energy of his thinking embodied in the crackle of his sentences.” When he got it right, Mailer punctuated his satisfaction “with two hard slaps on the table.”

After graduating from Harvard, Mailer landed in the army and was stationed on an island in the Philippines during World War II, fighting the Japanese. He determined not to keep a journal; rather, he sent home detailed observations about his experiences to his wife, Bea, whom he had married just before departure. He instructed her to save the letters, intending to utilize them in composing his first novel, *The Naked and the Dead*, which was published after the war to widespread acclaim when Mailer was merely twenty-five. The letters supply vivid pictures of the soldiers who would become characters in the novel, a cross section of America that the Harvard graduate encountered for the first time, including his lifelong friend Fig Gwaltney, “a Welshman by way of Arkansas.” Mailer was especially charmed by his droll Southern patois: “He’s got a magnificent tongue, sharp and nasal and uniquely biting.”

Mailer evokes the mess of war in colorful terms: “Today, darling, was one of the great moments in my life. I was given a machine gun. . . . If you have to read my letters from now on through a haze of oil it’s only because cleaning the guns is worse than caring for three infants.” Between patrols, Mailer reads and scribbles: “I’m trying to read *Walden*, but I find it annoying and dull.” Thoreau’s pacifism profoundly irritated the war novelist: “Any man who is a vegetarian and preaches asceticism is failing to account for the double-faced coin of man’s nature. The main thing that excites my mind is paradox—there is something thrilling, dramatic, aesthetic, when you have about you fundamental opposites in basic interdependence.”

Of the more than 45,000 letters that Mailer wrote in his lifetime, Lennon has chosen fewer than 800 sent to more than 100 recipients, and balances the selected output across seven decades. Lennon orients each chapter with an incisive summary of key books and events that define the decade, opening with a photograph of the period: college, the war, and *The Naked and the Dead* center the 1940s. Lennon writes: “Slabs of [the novel] were taken wholesale from the hundreds of letters he wrote to Beatrice while overseas.”

The 1950s open with Mailer goateed and wearing a skullcap, grinning in beatnik garb, as if he is aware he is out of character. Lennon begins, “This was Mailer’s toughest decade as a writer. Wealthy and famous, he nevertheless felt disoriented and depleted; he didn’t know what to write about next.” Mailer nurtured friendships with the French intellectual Jean Malaquais, engaging in intricate discussions about Marx and Freud, and with psychiatrist Robert Lindner, author of *Rebel Without a Cause*, with whom he discussed altered states of consciousness. He published two significant books: *Advertisements for Myself* (my favorite book for the way it strings together disparate elements in the manner of a magazine) and his comeback novel, *The Deer Park*, which received an astonishingly equal number of negative and positive reviews, signaling to Mailer a new way to promote himself by quoting the good and bad side by side.

I imagine another book could be culled from the letters written to the women Mailer married,



Mailer and Lennon in Provincetown, 2005 PHOTO BY OONNA PEORO LENNON

Mailer on Marriage, if only there were more of these missives. Of Mailer’s many wives, he wrote only to his first wife, Beatrice, and his last, Norris. He never wrote to Adele, Lady Jeanne, Beverly, or Carol, since he was never away from them long enough. Like King Henry VIII, the writer whose middle name was Kingsley married six times; asked why, he said, “You only get to know a woman in divorce court.” All of his wives possessed strong personalities, which colored their presence in Mailer’s life and in his writing.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Mailer produced a series of extraordinary books that redefined the power of journalism to exceed the reach of the novel. He wrote *The Armies of the Night*, his astonishing account of the 1967 antiwar March on the Pentagon, which won the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize. Instead of using a novelistic approach, with a persona as a main character, Mailer spoke of himself in the third person in a series of nonfiction narratives—accessible and informal in such guises as “Mailer,” “Aquarius,” and “The Prisoner”—a device that ushered in the New Journalism of Truman Capote, Gay Talese, Joan Didion, and Tom Wolfe. Brilliantly, Mailer found a way to broaden the limited point of view of a single character by gaining the omniscience of what Lennon calls “the third-person personal” and which the poet Mary Oliver, in using “we” in her poems to speak for all of humanity in a single voice, calls “the singular plural.” The summa of this method is ultimately realized in Mailer’s last novel, *The Castle in the Forest*, in which Mailer adopts the witnessing voice of a German SS officer, also an agent of the devil and therefore intentionally fictional, who tells the factual story of Hitler’s first sixteen years of life. In doing so, Mailer found a voice in which he could whisper in the language of the enemy and gain subtle access to the reader’s consciousness.

Mailer’s letters are addressed to an enormous range of people, from the Kennedys to convicts, as if the imaginative writer thrived on access to psyches beyond his experiential knowledge. To the editor in chief of *Cosmopolitan* magazine, Helen Gurley Brown, he complains about unprepared interviewers: “I’ve always hated the question which takes 1% out of the interviewer and 99% out of the subject.” Mailer wants a return of wit, enterprise, and surprise, explaining, “I don’t want to push a

Cadillac up a hill,” and suggesting that he is a fine vehicle that does not want an untested chauffeur to let him run out of gas.

Writing to Jack Abbott, after he had just finished *The Executioner’s Song*, Mailer reflects that prison regulations exactly achieve their purpose of tormenting inmates: “It’s the smallness of the occasion, and the degree of obfuscation, that shakes up that particular cocktail. Somehow I think that the human soul is built to encounter major injustice with more equanimity than the penny varieties.” In another letter to Abbott, Mailer mentions a likeness between Abbott and William Burroughs, passing on a strategy that may help him. He quotes Burroughs, who said, “I parachute my characters behind enemy lines in time. Their mission is to correct retroactively certain fatal errors at crucial points in human history.”

Advising his seventeen-year-old son Stephen in his courtship of a stellar eighteen-year-old girl, the father is avuncular: “So what I figure, my friend, is even if you get near, you are going to have huge competition, which isn’t going to be good for your ego since you are no fonder of being on a yo-yo than anyone else in the family. If you’re going to use a tactic on her, I’d try to nettle her vanity.”

To Saul Bellow, Mailer shares the theme of the conference he will organize as the new president of PEN. Having just published *Of a Fire on the Moon*, about the Apollo 11 moon shot, Mailer suggests the following theme: writers will consider whether the “imagination of the state” is superior to that of the individual writer.

To Gore Vidal: “Our feud, whatever its roots for each of us, has become a luxury. I’d like to make up. A part of me runs independently fond of you.”

He writes candidly to Richard Stratton about the pleasures of directing the movie *Tough Guys Don’t Dance*, “I always felt I was in jail when I was writing a novel. Directing the movie, I found out why. Directing a movie, you contemplate forty different categories of problems in a day, and you get an appetite for it.”

To the parents of Debra Sandlund, the twenty-four-year-old actress who played Patty Lareine in *Tough Guys*, Mailer expounds on the value of her innocence: “Only the innocent can portray evil. It has been my experience that evil people do their best to conceal what is most evil in themselves. Only the

natural and the innocent will have no hesitation in searching for that delicate bit of what is wrong and corrupt in themselves and feel no hesitation about expanding that mote of the impure into a full-blown performance."

Three-quarters of the way through writing the mammoth novel *Ancient Evenings*, set deeply in times past, Mailer writes to actor/writer (and former brother-in-law) Mickey Knox: "To write a novel an entire reorganization of one's nervous system and the formation of new working habits are necessary."

To Anne Barry, his assistant, he wrote: "The sad truth is that I'm still at my best when I'm half-loaded." Later in the letter, Mailer senses, "When you work on something steadily, you mobilize your unconscious." He also remarks, "If Freud had not explored the unconscious, I would have had to explain it."

Lennon sees three forces that drive Mailer: a sense of mission from his devoted mother, a sense of risk from the gambler who was his accountant father, and constant financial pressure to produce writing under crushing deadlines.

Mailer supercharged himself with intense attention to writing, the process fueling his ideation and the ideas stimulating his imagination. His letters are an overflow of his energy. Taking on more, Mailer created a condition of *synergy*, an interaction of multiple elements in a system to produce an effect different from the sum of individual effects. The term is derived from a Greek word meaning "working together." If synergy is the ability of a team to outperform even its best individual members, then we can see the practical consequences of Mailer's working with others in active dialogue—Jean Malaquais on politics, Robert Lindner on psychology, Muhammad Ali on the dynamics of competitive sports, his wives on marital relations, his publishers on control, his fellow writers on how to pull the best out of oneself, his challenges in running for mayor of New York, or his experiments with producing four movies. Buckminster Fuller refined the definition of synergy to include what he called "emergent behavior," in which the combined result is not predicted, and includes the cooperative interaction of substances such as drugs or other consciousness-altering stimuli. Alcohol, Mailer said, made him feel more masculine; on "Lipton's tea," he felt more feminine. From Hemingway, he said, he learned "the power of restraint." From Faulkner, "the power of excess."

When one is mindful of how the English novel began as a recasting of experience through diarist letter-writing and firsthand autobiographic accounts in works by Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding, it is not surprising that Mailer would excel in the art of the epistle, even though, as a post-modern novelist, he would disparage it as more elemental than evolved. Describing his research into excavating Mailer's psyche, Lennon uses the term *spelunking*, which refers to the exploration of underground caverns. With more Mailer material waiting to be published, Lennon is not yet done illuminating Mailer's vast mysteries. ✕

CHRISTOPHER BUSA is editor of Provincetown Arts.

Joan Lebold Cohen

BUILDING A BRIDGE TO CONTEMPORARY CHINESE ART

By E. J. Kahn III

JUST A FEW WEEKS AFTER I visited Joan Lebold Cohen's art-filled duplex apartment at one of Manhattan's prestigious Park Avenue addresses, the *New Yorker* magazine published a profile of China's President Xi Jinping that noted "thousands of art students" were being evaluated as candidates for admission to a leading Beijing university based on "their ability to sketch his likeness." Coincidence or not, among the cornucopia of photos (many of them Joan's), paintings, collages, and sculptures, the first work that catches one's eye in the Cohen home—Joan and her husband, Jerome, also own a house overlooking the Pamet River in Truro—is a larger-than-life portrait of Jerry (as he's known on the Outer Cape, among other places) by contemporary (and self-taught) painter Kong Bai-ji. Kong's unexpected gift—he'd worked secretly from a photo supplied by Joan and Jerry's son Ethan Cohen, a New York gallery owner and dealer—serves well as a centerpiece of the family collection, in part to underscore the outsize role they've played over the past forty years in bringing contemporary Chinese art and its artists to America. Xi Jinping might concur.

Established as both influencers and patrons, Joan, Jerry, and, more recently, Ethan have also acted as advocates of artists who, while working in other emerging Asian countries, struggle to be heard and seen. Jerry, a New York University law professor and one of this country's experts in Chinese law, is a human-rights advocate who has been instrumental in helping a number of activists—most notably lawyer/writer Chen Guangcheng—leave China. Son Ethan (youngest of three), a collector and expert on modern Asian art, gave Ai Weiwei his first American show, in part the result of a friendship that dates back to the eighties. And Joan—a champion of contemporary Chinese art who was the first visiting American art scholar to identify and report on its emergence in the seventies—is a pioneering historian committed to raising awareness of Chinese artists' impact and importance. Joan has written several books on the subject, including *China Today and Her Ancient Treasures* (with her husband), *The New Chinese Painting, 1949–1986*, and *Yunnan School: A Renaissance in Chinese Painting*, which is illustrated by her photographs. Indeed, her images—she shows regularly at New York's Soho Photo Gallery—of the Chinese landscape and its people have attracted as much, perhaps even more, attention as have her lectures and writing.

We began our conversation by reflecting on the emergence of contemporary art as a market in China.

E. J. Kahn: Joan, in your essay in this issue you identify some important emerging contemporary Chinese artists and discuss how they and their art found a place in what many of us imagine would be an incredibly difficult

environment. (See "Art and Politics in China" on page 86.) I'd like to hear a bit about how you found yourself interacting and working with them for almost four decades. Indeed, could you even imagine a contemporary art market, to say nothing of an Art Basel Hong Kong, back in the seventies?

Joan Lebold Cohen: It's a big change. I remember the very first art auction that I was aware of in Hong Kong in 1979. One of the distinguished heads of one of the leading art schools had decided to auction some paintings from his collection. William Ellsworth, an American furniture expert, bought his first collection of contemporary Chinese art at that sale and gave it to the Met. That was a beginning, and—well-informed or not—one can't diss a beginning. At the same time, my friend Zhang Ding, an artist and art administrator of the Central Academy of Arts and Design, was showing his ink paintings in Hong Kong. "Did you sell any?" I asked him later. He looked at me as if I were a zombie. "Why would I ever want to sell anything?" he wondered. "We don't sell art."

EJK: Because he was a Communist?

JLC: Of course. The whole idea of trafficking in art—that was out of the question. They would use it for prestige and presents, things like that. It was all masked; the money wasn't on the surface. Now, there's this huge market. And the Chinese love money. I remember seeing the first money tree, a treelike sculpture with ancient currency from the second century BC, and being reminded that money has always held importance to Chinese society. The fact that artists there are interested in it doesn't surprise me in the least.

EJK: Your first China visit, in 1972, was as part of a



Joan Lebold Cohen

scientific exchange, the first in twenty-three years between the two countries. You accompanied your husband, Jerry, and it took you quite a while to see any art. You've written that you saw pandas, Albanian basketball players, dancers, the Great Wall, classrooms, a tractor factory, and, eventually, the Forbidden City. Then you finally saw some art.

JLC: That's true. I am primarily an art historian, and so I was very interested in seeing all those things, including the tractor factory. But everywhere, even at the factory, we were greeted by dance performances. So there was art in people's lives. Fortunately, there just happened to be, in Beijing, the first real art exhibition of that era. During the Cultural Revolution, art for art's sake was not allowed: it was considered counterrevolutionary. At the 1972 exhibition, what I saw was done in a propaganda style, but informative. It gave me an idea of where the Chinese were visually, who the heroes were, the great leaders. Workers, peasants, and soldiers were, front and center, always the subject, and always engaged in some humanitarian occupation—riding a tractor, digging a ditch, listening to an old veteran in a classroom. All very upbeat. A kind of Pop Art.

EJK: *Forty years later, we have artists, as you've written about in this issue, who have become quite skilled at moving way beyond the cartoonish and way beyond the sort of lockstep support of the party line. But they do it in a very nuanced way. Did you see this evolution firsthand?*

JLC: Absolutely. I lived there from 1979 until 1981, and the exhibitions I would see focused on, as I mentioned before, workers, peasants, soldiers, and heroes. Then there was a softening. By 1989, artists were being provocative, making fun of those same groups, even after the tragedy of Tiananmen in 1989. That year, I was afraid to go and visit my friends at the art school. When I finally did come in 1990, they asked, "Why didn't you come sooner? We're waiting for you. You know, we really need you at a time like this." And many of those friends came and lived here in the US, some for just one or two years, some for ten or more.

EJK: *Meanwhile, China was changing dramatically, wasn't it?*

JLC: In the nineties, when China began to be a great power and a great

economic power, artists returned home and started selling their work. There was money—big collectors like Uli Sigg, the Swiss, buying all the great artists. Much of that is now at M+, the new visual arts museum to be built in Hong Kong. Hong Kong itself had not been interested in contemporary Chinese art in the past; all of a sudden, fortunately, it has awakened like the sleeping giant. Conversely, in Beijing, contemporary edgy work is often shown. But that's very touchy, and the exhibitions can be closed down in a heartbeat. It's much easier in Guangzhou, where—as they say—"the emperor is far away." Even in Shanghai, it's freer. Nevertheless, as I've written, the Chinese Communist Party's hand has a long reach. There are "watchers" everywhere.

EJK: *Have you, as a visitor there, been under surveillance?*

JLC: The first time we went to China, I was the only person in the delegation who knew anything about Chinese history. I wanted to go to the two ancient capitals of Luoyang and Xi'an. After our itinerary was announced, and they weren't on it, Jerry and I returned to our room, where I complained loudly to him. The next morning, the head of the Cultural Bureau told me the plan had changed, and we would go to the two cities. They had been listening to everything we said to each other. I'm sure our phone is tapped here in the US as well.

EJK: *It's not entirely surprising, given your family's involvement with human rights in China—for example, helping activist Chen Guangcheng to leave the country in 2012, and come to New York. Or supporting Ai Weiwei and—through your son Ethan—arranging his first exhibition in this city.*

JLC: Years before Chen's escape from house arrest and eventual arrival in New York, Jerry and I went to his farm in the countryside in Shandong. Jerry had met him earlier and came away deeply impressed. He said then he could see him as the new Gandhi because he was such a charismatic person. Chen told Jerry, "The only way you will understand my situation is to come and visit me in Shandong." So we did. It was a remote little village, quite hard to get to. And primitive. If you go to the Metropolitan Museum's Han dynasty exhibition—set around the time of Christ—you'll see models of village life then, an oven, a water well, farm animals. That's just what his village looked like. There was a dwelling where they slept; there was another where the cooking was done. There was no stove—you simply built a fire. There was a little building where he would see local people who were disabled, whom he was trying to help. There were chickens. Nothing that suggested the twenty-first century. I asked, "Where are your family fields?" After all, they were farmers. Then he showed me a single row of corn. How could you make a living at that? I watched people harvesting peanuts. Have you ever seen how peanuts grow? You dig into the mud, pull up the root, and pick off a nut. Do a field, and at the end you have a bag you can sell for twenty dollars. The poverty was amazing.

EJK: *There was a poverty—if you will—of understanding about contemporary art outside China, too, wasn't there?*

JLC: When I first visited the Central Arts Academy in 1979, I was interviewed by the school president and shown an exhibition of teachers' work. I could see that there was a great deal that was in the tradition of traditional Chinese art, but that there was also something new. And they saw that I could be interesting for them. I had been living in Japan, and had lectured there on contemporary American art. I had color slides, and offered to organize a talk. They were thrilled.

At the lecture, the artists were so excited. They had never seen the work of Jackson Pollock. It was as if thirty years hadn't happened. One of the most sophisticated audience members asked, "What are they saying about Dali in America?" "Nobody's talking about him," I had to explain. In fact, the only artist outside of China any of them had conversed with in decades was a Russian painting expert.

EJK: *I assume that changed when travel restrictions began to ease?*

JLC: Yes. As international artists began visiting China, and Chinese artists began visiting the West, they immediately saw what was going on. The first Chinese artist I took to the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard talked about a nineteenth-century painting that he wanted to see. "It's right behind you," I told him. I thought he would die of ecstasy, he was so excited. I had the

good fortune to often go to the museums with these artists. And I learned so much from them. You know, they would make remarks that I would never have dreamt of because they see with different eyes, and they have a different context. I spent my time meeting artists, and interviewing them, and photographing them and their work. And that's when I collected materials for the first book on contemporary Chinese art, which at that time no one was interested in because it was before China was a great power. People said the most rude things. Chinese art? What are you talking about? As if the Chinese, who had been so creative for five thousand years, couldn't produce great art just because the country was Communist. Well, of course, it wasn't true at all.

EJK: *This engagement with contemporary Chinese art has influenced your own work, hasn't it?*

JLC: In Hong Kong, I saw the landscapes I'd seen in paintings in the museums of Boston. I started photographing them. I'd never owned a camera until then, and I got hooked. The landscape is so dramatic and gorgeous—the mountains, the mist, the water. It's all there. It's just a question of seeing it. Thirty years later, I'm still hooked. It relates so closely to traditional Chinese landscape painting, yet has something to do with the contemporary as well. Artists paint what they see. This was my opportunity, and I took advantage of it.

EJK: *I can see those seized opportunities on your walls—fields, farms, flowers.*

JLC: We spent four years, from 2002 to 2005, at the Tsinghua University, which is in the northwest part of Beijing. Finally, I had the time and equipment to look at nature with my camera. I spent those years photographing the lotuses in the campus pond, and the lotus lake near the old Summer Palace. It was revelatory, especially in autumn, when there were few flowers. Just the leaves, the water, the sun.

That suited me just fine. ▲

E. J. KAHN III—better known as Terry in the Pamet River Valley—has served as an editor of the late Provincetown Advocate and Boston Magazine, and as a consultant in Washington and New York City, where he lives with his wife, Lesley Silvester. Since the fall of 2014, he has served as President of the Provincetown Arts Press Board of Directors.

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Writing Is What I Most Want to Do

AN INTERVIEW WITH ANN PATCHETT

By Margaret Murphy

ANN PATCHETT WROTE her first novel, *The Patron Saint of Liars*, in 1990–1991, while she was a fiction Fellow at the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown. Since then, she has written another five novels and three works of nonfiction. I met Ann at FAWC's 2014 summer gala, where she was honored for her contribution to American arts and letters. That evening we became friends for life. Ann has received many other honors, fellowships, and awards, including a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1995, and the Orange Prize for Fiction, the PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction, and the Book Sense Book of the Year Award for her novel *Bel Canto* in 2002. *The Magician's Assistant* and *State of Wonder*, two of her other novels, were short-listed for the Orange Prize. In November of 2011, in response to the closing of so many bookstores, Patchett opened Parnassus Books in Nashville—overnight, in the age of Amazon, she became the most famous independent bookseller and the spokesperson for independent bookstores. In 2012, Patchett—author, bookseller, and literary pioneer—was named by *TIME* magazine as one of the most influential people in the world. She lives in Nashville with her husband, Karl VanDevender, and their dog, Sparky.

Margaret Murphy: *Why do you write, and when you write why is it usually fiction? You've said that you've known since you were five years old that being a writer was your life's mission. Now that you're fifty, how different is your vision from when you were five?*

Ann Patchett: Writing is clear proof that all of your basic needs have been met—I have food, I have shelter, I have security in my life; now I can make art. I write because I have so much freedom and stability that I can do the thing I most want to do. Writing is a luxury—I'm always aware of that. I like to write fiction because it's harder for me. I go through long spells of writing essays, and I have a great time, but there's always a summer vacation quality to the whole thing—I'm relaxing, having fun. After a while I want to get back to school. A novel can engage me for years because there are so many things I have to figure out. I'm in charge of everything with a novel. I like that.

The extent to which my five-year-old vision of my fifty-year-old life was correct is a little unsettling. "Creepy" might be a better word. I never thought I would be successful, and I didn't really think I would be happy, so I was wrong about that (well, I didn't think about any of that when I was five—I'm talking about a little later). But the basic ideas of wanting to devote my days to writing, to being quiet, to being alone, to endless reading—I got that part right.

I have a very close friend, Tavia Cathcart, whom I've known since I was six. I love her like a sister. I would do anything for her. But I often look at her and think, how did we pick each other out when we were six? How did we know what we would need in a friend later on? What are the

chances? My relationship to writing is a little like my relationship to Tavia.

MM: *Do you want to write because you have a story to tell, or do you find the story because writing is what you most want to do?*

AP: I think writing is what I most want to do, but I can't do it unless I have a story to tell, and stories can be hard to come by these days. When I was younger, I thought that pretty much any story that came into my head was worth telling. I had a much higher opinion of my own thoughts when I was twenty-five. Everything I do now is influenced by my sense of time—is this story worth my time to write? Should I ask someone I've never met to spend time reading this? The story has to really be worth something for me to want to take it on—or at least that's the case for fiction. I write a lot of short nonfiction, and I don't bring the same standards to bear when I sit down to write a piece for a magazine. I would waste someone's time for 2,000 words. I would try very hard not to waste someone's time for 350 pages.

MM: *How do you come by your stories these days? The voices, the plots, the places—where do they come from?*

AP: Stories are everywhere. A single issue of the *New York Times* should be enough to keep me in stories for the rest of my life. People tell me things, I observe things, I start to wonder. Life goes forward, shedding stories on every surface (I'm presently dog-sitting a friend's large collie mutt, so all metaphors will be shedding related). The problem, of course, is finding the right story, the one that stirs deep curiosity, the one that can hold me for a long time. That's the trick. Often my books are inspired by my books. Something comes up in one



Ann Patchett in her bookstore, 2013 PHOTO BY HEIQU ROSS

book that I feel I didn't really get to pay attention to, and so I want to take that idea forward into the next book. For example, *Magician's Assistant* was the first book I did any real research for. I researched magic and found out I hated magic—so, I thought, in my next book I want to write about something I don't know anything about that actually interests me. And that led me to South America and to opera. *Bel Canto* was also about the suspension of time, and as it turned out it was very difficult for me to write about suspended time, so, I thought, in my next book I want everything to be on the clock. *Run* essentially takes place in twenty-four hours. I loved that. There was a character in that book, Tip Doyle, who studied ichthyology, and I became very interested in evolutionary biology. I wished the entire book was about scientists. That wish led to *State of Wonder*. That's the way it goes. The novel I'm writing now is, at least structurally, based on my family, something I said I'd never do. But after publishing *This Is the Story of a Happy Marriage* I thought, now that I've written about aspects of my life and no one was too upset by it, wouldn't it be interesting to use those characters in fiction? Now I feel like I'm writing the book I should have written when I was twenty-five.

MM: What inspired *Patron Saint of Liars*, the book you did write in your twenties?

AP: That was such a long time ago. I was twenty-five when I left my first husband and my teaching job and moved back to Nashville. I was living in my mother's guest room and working as a waitress at a TGI Fridays. I had published several stories in *Seventeen*, and I wanted to write more because the money was good. I started thinking about a story of a girl in a home for unwed mothers who wants to have her baby without making any sound, without being found out, so that she'll get to ride to the hospital and hold the baby before she has to give it up. Then I thought I could stretch the story out and make it into a novel. That's what I thought about while I was waitressing. Who were the girls who lived in this home? What happened to the

fathers and what would happen to the children? I thought at the time that this was a great act of imagination on my part, but twenty-five years later I see it more as me trying to sort through my own actions: why had I run away from my life? What would happen to me? Fiction is always the truth and it's never the truth. It's an exercise in working through alternate scenarios. I was very grateful that I didn't have any children back then, that I wasn't pregnant. I think that story probably leaked into my imagination.

MM: Many of us had a deep experience with *Truth & Beauty*, the story of your friendship with Lucy Grealy, which is a true story. I read it, and was very moved by it. Then I read Grealy's Autobiography of a Face, the story of her fight with childhood cancer and her consequent disfigurement. Of all the things Lucy said, this impressed me the most: "Reading and writing poetry brought together everything that had ever been important to me. I could still dwell in the realm of the senses, but now I had a discipline, a form for them. Rather than a way to create my own private life and shun the world, the ability to perceive was now a way to enter the world." I wonder whether reading and writing fiction has done anything like this for you?

AP: No, I don't think reading and writing did this for me. Reading and writing for me has probably come closer to creating my own private life and shunning the world. I'm probably doing the thing she says she was lifted out of, but what's so sad is that I don't think reading and writing actually worked for her. I think she wanted so much to believe that reading and writing would make it possible for her to navigate her suffering, but it didn't. Lucy hated writing more than any writer I've ever known. She hated being alone. She thought that reading and writing would make all the time she spent alone meaningful, but in the end it didn't. Poetry wasn't a cure for loneliness.

MM: Lucy talks about how the ability to perceive can be a way to enter the world. This is how I think about your writing. Your stories radiate a knowingness about people living in the world, how they think and feel and act and

love in the world. If you shun the world, you also embrace it. Do you see this kind of yin-yang in your work?

AP: I see it as the yin-yang of my life. I have to step back and seal things off in order to have the time and the mental clarity to imagine and write a whole novel (I can still do nonfiction while completely immersed in other things). And I love the quiet world. I love lying on the couch and staring at the ceiling trying to figure out what happens next, but I understand that I have to transition back and forth. Life in the world is what gives me the stories, the empathy, to eventually go back and write. Writing a book is wonderful, but it's also a way to hide, at least it is for me, and I don't want to spend my whole life hiding.

I often find myself thinking, as surely everyone does, if I didn't have all these obligations, if I hadn't agreed to take care of so many people, to speak at so many benefits, to be a good friend and wife and daughter and cultural citizen, just imagine what I could accomplish! But then I tell myself, and I hope this is true, that all of the things that pull me away from my work ultimately feed my work. Those are the things that make me the person I am, and what is my writing except the person I am? So, for the most part, I'm at peace with it. Since we opened the bookstore in November of 2011, my life has become incredibly public. I feel like I've spent the past three years speaking to civic groups and schoolchildren. But then I said, okay, back in your room, back to your desk, and everyone was so nice about it. I'm finding my private life, my writing life, all over again.

MM: At what point in your writing life did you learn about the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown and become interested in becoming a Fellow?

AP: I found out about the Work Center when I was a graduate student at the Iowa Writers' Workshop. There were certain programs and fellowships that everyone applied for—the Work Center, the Stegner Fellowship at Stanford, a writer-in-residency program at Phillips Exeter, and another one at the University of Wisconsin. I think every person graduating from an MFA program anywhere in the country secretly believes he or she will land one of these spots, which, when you consider the numbers, is heartbreaking. Of course, I didn't get in to the Work Center for a few more years after that. I worked in a bookstore, I taught, I was a waitress. When I got my letter of acceptance, I felt as if my life had been saved.

MM: Looking back over the past twenty-five years, what is the importance of the Work Center in your life?

AP: I was reading Maureen Corrigan's book about *Gatsby* last night, *So We Read On*. There was a wonderful quote from a letter Fitzgerald wrote to his daughter, Scottie: "What little I've accomplished has been by the most laborious and uphill work, and I wish now I'd never relaxed or looked back—but said at the end of *The Great Gatsby*: 'I've found my line—from now on this comes first. This is my immediate duty—without this I am nothing.'" I thought, that's exactly what I learned at the Work Center. I can hold on to that knowledge for long stretches of time and then I lose it. I drop the

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thread and I find myself frantically searching for it again. I stop writing and my life becomes consumed with the thousands of small, reasonable things people ask me to do. At the Work Center, I learned for the first time how to put work first. That's an enormously important lesson.

MM: *Is writing easier for you now than it was when you were a Fellow, or is it more difficult?*

AP: Let me answer this one twice. Writing is easier now because at this point I understand all of the tricks of my own brain. While writing a novel, especially in the first eighty to a hundred pages, I will decide that what I'm writing is terrible—the plot is obvious, the characters are shallow, the whole thing is boring. Later I'll lose my way so completely I'm sure I'll never find my way out. I will despair. It's as if I have my own stages of grief. They come predictably every time. Now that I'm working on my seventh novel, my tenth book, I understand this and can calm myself down, but when I was at the Work Center writing *Patron Saint of Liars*, I thought I was doomed. I spent a lot of time panicking, thinking that I couldn't write a novel after all and that I'd wind up back in Nashville waitressing at Fridays and living in my mother's guest room.

And writing was easier for me then because I had no other life. There was nothing to do but write. We were all so broke. There was no money to go out and there was no place to go even if we'd had money. Long distance was so expensive! I made a few short phone calls home on the weekends.

Everything in the world has been changed by the Internet and cell phones, and I think the experience of being a Fellow must be very different now because you aren't just completely cut off from everything. I'm always longing to re-create that depth of quiet in my life, to turn everything off and just think. I wrote a four-hundred-page novel in seven months when I was a Fellow, every word, start to finish. I couldn't do that now unless someone sent me to prison with a typewriter.

MM: *Grace Paley, one of the greatest writers of the twentieth century, was an important person at the Fine Arts Work Center. Her very last reading on this earth, in the summer of 2007, was at the Work Center. What impact did Grace have on your life as a Fellow and as a writer?*

AP: I studied with Grace when I was a junior at Sarah Lawrence. The workshops were a year long—that would have been 1983-84. So I knew Grace, and she had a huge impact on me, but our connection wasn't through the Work Center. People are always asking me if writing can be taught and I say, yes, I can teach you how to write a better sentence, how to write dialogue, how to construct a plot, but I can't teach you how to have something to say. I can't teach you how to have character. That's what Grace was trying to do. She was trying to teach her students how to be decent people, how to have depth, a sense of responsibility. I don't think she cared about our writing really—or she figured if she could make us better people, a nearly impossible task, we'd figure out the writing thing on our own.

The year before I studied with Grace, I'd been Allan Gurganus's student. Allan had been a student of Grace's at Sarah Lawrence himself years before. When I found out I'd gotten into Grace's class, I was thrilled. Everyone wanted to study with Grace. I went to tell Allan, and he told me I might not understand what she was teaching me at the time but that I'd get it later, and that was exactly how it happened. I was a pretty quiet student. I worked hard and didn't ask for things and got my work in on time. I wasn't the kind of student Grace paid much attention to, because her attention tended to go toward people who were in crisis (and there were lots of them studying fiction at Sarah Lawrence in the '80s). I felt sorry for myself in that class, but over time I came to see it was all a lesson in compassion, a lesson in listening. I look back on that time in my life and feel astonished that I ever met Grace Paley, much less that I got to sit in her presence for a year and be shaped by her. The last time I saw her was at a luncheon at the American Academy in New York. It wasn't long before she died. I was asking her how she was and she said that she was great. She told me she had met so many nice people in chemotherapy. I loved her. ☒

MARGARET MURPHY was Executive Director of the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown for six years, starting in 2007. Prior to her time at the Work Center, which she considers her job-of-a-lifetime, she practiced law in New York City as head of the environmental practice in an international law firm and later as founder of a Greenwich Village-based nonprofit legal services group serving older New Yorkers in need.

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The Miami-Provincetown Literary Connection

By Raymond Elman

THE MIAMI BOOK FAIR INTERNATIONAL (MBFI) is the largest book fair in the United States (www.miamibookfair.com). In 2014, MBFI celebrated its thirty-first anniversary and presented over six hundred writers to hundreds of thousands of readers. Held every November at Miami Dade College in the heart of downtown Miami, MBFI is an eight-day literary party that has consistently attracted the participation of literary figures with connections to Outer Cape Cod.

A partial list of writers with Outer Cape connections who have participated in the MBFI or presented at Miami's Books & Books includes Norman Mailer, Michael Cunningham, Sebastian Junger, Alec Wilkinson, David Michaelis, Nick Flynn, Robert Pinsky, Annie Dillard, Mary Oliver, Daniel Okrent, Justin Kaplan, Anne Bernays, Mark Doty, Tony Kushner, Hilary Masters, Marge Piercy, Maria Flook, Hayden Herrera, John Waters, Susan Mitchell, Grace Paley, and Richard Blanco.

The book fair was cofounded by Mitchell Kaplan, the owner/founder of Books & Books (www.booksandbooks.com), and Eduardo J. Padrón, the president of Miami Dade College (MDC). Books & Books has become one of the premier independent bookstore groups in the United States, and Mitch is a highly respected leader of his industry. MDC has grown to become the largest institution for higher education in Florida, and the second-largest in the United States.

In March, I had the opportunity to sit down with Mitch Kaplan at his flagship bookstore in Coral Gables and discuss the odyssey that has produced one of the best bookstores of my experience, and the largest book fair in the United States. Mitch also reminisced about the writers with Outer Cape connections who have presented at the MBFI or at Books & Books.



Mitchell Kaplan at Books & Books, Coral Gables, FL. PHOTO BY RAYMOND ELMAN

"I was in Miami for the book fair with *Schulz and Peanuts: A Biography* in November 2007. HarperCollins sent me there at the tail end of a long book tour, and when I saw the Raleigh hotel on Miami Beach, where they were footing the bill, and soaked my honey-coated-peanut-seat-on-the-aisle soul in the good old Atlantic brine, and then ran into an old college classmate, the novelist Madison Smartt Bell, and the biographer Laurence Bergreen on a panel almost immediately upon arrival at the fair, I felt as though I'd come home. Don't know why coast-to-coast book tours are like that, but they are, or were; or maybe that almost bird-like sense of homecoming—which, of course, was always about 35 percent of the P-town land's-end experience—had less to do with too many delayed flights and actually more to do with the fair and the fountain-world, not so much of youth as of ideas, that Mitch Kaplan unleashed there. I do remember meeting Mitch and admiring his devotion to the cause—a P-town flower-power impresario and intellectual beachcomber, for sure—and to the eclectic and electric community he plugged us all into. It's a great achievement. All we were missing was the dunes." — David Michaelis

Ray Elman: How long have you lived in the Miami area?

Mitch Kaplan: I was born in Miami and I grew up in Miami Beach—I have lived here for virtually my whole life. However, I went away to college at the University of Colorado in Boulder, where I was an English major—me and about eight or nine thousand others were English majors, and there were only about two hundred business majors. It was a very different world back then. And Boulder was a perfect place for me as a kid from Miami Beach who had never seen mountains or snow.

When I graduated, like a lot of English majors in the 1970s, I panicked and went to law school—a law school called Antioch, in Washington, DC, that focused on social change. For example, in my first year I was in prisons working on prisoners' rights. But, after a couple of years, I knew that law just wasn't for me.

RE: When did you first start thinking about opening a bookstore?

"The Miami Book Fair was a blast. There were so many people there I had a hard time believing it was a book fair rather than a music festival. The crowd seemed almost giddy, as if they had been handed a nice little happy pill along with their ticket stub. Justin and I were on a panel that was televised, which was nice. I think we sold some books." — Anne Bernays

MK: I grew up with some great bookstores on Miami Beach. For example, there was a great Doubleday bookstore on Lincoln Road. Authors were my heroes and, being an English major, I learned about many of the great bookstores in literary history, such as Shakespeare and Company, the Gotham Book Mart, and City Lights, and what they meant to their communities. So I got an advanced degree in English and returned to Miami to teach English and work at a B. Dalton bookstore to learn the business. And then I opened a bookstore in Coral Gables and taught at the same time. I told myself that if I earned as much from bookselling as I earned from teaching, I would devote myself to bookselling. Fortunately, I was earning so little as a teacher that it wasn't hard to achieve that goal. I did that in 1982, and that's when I started selling books full-time.

RE: Where did the name *Books & Books* come from?

MK: I was thinking of all sorts of names—like Bent Tree Bookstore—and then I was in a café, and I was telling a waitress about my plan, and she asked,

"Well, what are you going to carry?" And I said, "We're just going to carry books and books." And I thought, "Eureka!"

RE: So what happened when you opened for business? I can't imagine that the world was beating a path to your door.

MK: Well, they were. You've got to remember that the world in those days was different. In 1982, 50 percent of books sold were sold in independent bookstores. There were seven or eight independent bookstores in the Miami area. And my bookstore was beautiful—much like it is now—with floor to ceiling books.

RE: How did you develop the "look" of *Books & Books*?

MK: I always felt that bookstores should be the ultimate in browsing, with floor to ceiling books and library ladders. But, as we built other stores, I felt that they shouldn't be "cookie-cutter." You could have a little hole-in-the-wall bookstore that looks like a bodega, and it could be fantastic. It just has to be right for its audience. It's about making a place that really feels comfortable.

RE: So you started *Books & Books* in 1982, and you cofounded the Miami Book Fair in 1984. That's a pretty big leap. How did you have the gravitas to start a book fair?

MK: Well, I did something even quicker. In 1983, I started something called the Coral Gables Festival of Books & Writers, which was a mini book fair. I had been to book fairs in New York and Boston, and I had always wanted to have a festival in Miami, as well as open bookstores.

Dr. Eduardo Padrón had been to a book festival in Barcelona, and his brief, as president of the downtown campus of Miami Dade College, was to bring interest to downtown Miami. When he got wind of my festival in Coral Gables, and some

"There's no other book fair in the US remotely like Miami's. It feels as if the entire city is focused on books and writers and writing, which suggests that Mitch Kaplan is either a genius or a sorcerer. Or maybe both." — Dan Okrent

other activities around the Miami area, he called us all together at his office and suggested that we consolidate everything and organize a bigger fair on Miami Dade's downtown campus.

Starting the Miami Book Fair wasn't a question of gravitas or hubris—I knew what people were buying in the Miami area. From the moment we opened our doors at Books & Books, we were selling pretty sophisticated stuff.

RE: As I have been developing an arts publication platform for Miami, I sometimes hear people say that what I want to do with the publication is too intellectual, too sophisticated for Miami.

MK: I'm on the front lines and I reject that characterization. Miami is as sophisticated as any other city. But keep in mind that Miami only has 2.5 million people, and English is no longer the first language of Miami. But the sophistication levels here are really, really high. I know what other independent booksellers sell around the country, and nobody has us beat in terms of the sophistication of the books we sell. We have a Spanish book buyer, sell lots of books in Spanish, and have Spanish events. We revel in the diversity of Miami.

RE: How large was the first Miami Book Fair?

MK: The first book fair lasted for two days, we had seventy authors, and it was a smashing success. We started with the same format we have now—a street fair for publishers and talks by authors. We had James Baldwin talk the first year. We had Marge Piercy from the Cape. And people came.

RE: Who are some of the other Outer Cape Cod authors who have spoken at the book fair or at *Books & Books*?

MK: Well, let's start with Hilary Masters. He came to Books & Books right after we opened and read from *Last Stands: Notes from Memory*, which is a marvelous book about him and his father, Edgar Lee Masters. Hilary was a really engaging speaker, and he was very open about his relationship with his father, who was a great poet. I felt like I was in the presence of a deeply literate sensibility. I tend to honor those kinds of memories. I have been a conduit for thirty years for writers who were important in the latter part of the twentieth century to a whole new collection of writers now. The memories I have of those folks, many of whom are no longer being read, are important to keep alive.

One of our very first autograph sessions at Books & Books was with Isaac Singer, which was an amazing experience. I had the opportunity to visit with him at his apartment in Surfside, and he told me all sorts of stories. In the 1980s, Norman

"In 1989, I first presented at the Miami Book Fair in connection with the publication of my third book, *Big Sugar*, which was about sugarcane plantations in Florida. If you live in the North, just getting off the plane in Florida in November, and feeling warm air, and seeing pointy trees is always so strange. You feel like you have entered an exotic terrain. I went to the book fair to register and I was instantly surrounded by writers. I remember standing in line to check in behind Tracy Kidder, who was at the top of the mountain in those days. He had someone from his publishing company helping him check in, and I thought, 'That's the difference between his situation and mine.' I saw tons of authors and made connections with people that I may never have encountered otherwise. My experience presenting was a little humbling, however. At 2:45 p.m., I went into the huge room where I was supposed to speak at 3:00 p.m. and the room was absolutely overflowing with a very attentive audience. And I thought to myself, 'Well, I have arrived at a kind of literary nirvana.' I had never encountered such a passionate audience for books. Well, it turns out that the man speaking to that group was Dave Barry, a locally beloved writer whom I had never heard of at that time. Barry finishes at 2:55, and the room empties like you turned a bottle of water upside down. I wound up speaking to six people. Nevertheless, my first time at the Miami Book Fair was the first time that I had been in the company of so many exalted writers. For a young innocent like me that was a dramatic experience." — Alec Wilkinson

Mailer was here for *Ancient Evenings*, and he couldn't have been nicer or more generous with his time. He was feisty and articulate. He was in full force. Also around that time we had writers like Ken Kesey, John Updike, Maya Angelou, Jerzy Kosinski, Saul Bellow, Joseph Heller.

Of contemporary authors with connections to the Cape who presented at the book fair or at Books & Books, Alec Wilkinson has such a wide sensibility. Not only is he an amazing narrative journalist, but in his book on William Maxwell, and his *New Yorker* piece on Edward Hirsch, he also demonstrates a true literary sensibility, which I respond to very well. John Waters has been at the fair many times and presented at the fair this year. He's so funny and outrageous, but he has a sense of humanity that shines through.

Michael Cunningham has come to the fair for most of his books. Michael has an audience in Miami; he's a great reader and has a great presence on stage. I think he really enjoys himself in South Florida.

Sebastian Junger has been here a number of times—and boy, watching his career develop has been amazing, from being a basic narrative journalist to becoming part of the news himself. He's become a commentator on things he understands deeply.

Dan Okrent is another fantastic guy and author, with a place on the Cape, who has presented at the bookstore and the fair. Dan's audiences at the fair have been very appreciative. He has a readership here in South Florida, and it's not just because he was with the *New York Times*. His books strike a nerve. The last time he was here was for *Last Call*, his book on Prohibition, and we went out to dinner. With some of the authors we have time to go out for dinner. I call it my five minutes with a million different writers—it's an enriching experience.

When I look back on the era when I started the Miami Book Fair, it was a time before the Internet, before computers. A time that just doesn't exist anymore. What I do isn't just about selling books—it's about creating spaces and events that bring authors and audiences together. I call it "honoring the literary culture." ❖

RAYMOND ELMAN started the Outer Cape Repertory Film Society in 1971, ran the To Be Coffeehouse from 1972 to 1973, and served for many years on the board of directors of the Provincetown Art Association and Museum, the Provincetown Group Gallery, and the Wellfleet Harbor Actors Theater. He and Chris Busa cofounded Provincetown Arts in 1985. (Ray left the magazine in 1990, and in 1991 the magazine became a publication of the nonprofit Provincetown Arts Press.) Ray's paintings and prints have been widely exhibited and are included in numerous collections. His paintings of Jhumpa Lahiri, Robert Pinsky, Stanley Kunitz, and Alan Dugan are in the permanent collection of the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery. In Miami, Ray is currently developing a new arts publication platform called "Inspicio," which is sponsored by Florida International University. (See rayelman.com and Inspicio.fiu.edu for more information.)

Memory Is the Political Correctness of the Heart

A CONVERSATION ABOUT WRITING WITH GREG O'BRIEN

By Melanie Braverman

"SOMEONE HAS PULLED the plug. Something has pulled the plug and there is no juice coming in. Conductor," he says. "Send me that. Say, *Look it up*."

We're sitting in a coffee shop with our laptops open, me and Greg O'Brien and this other guy Greg calls The Demon. There might be a little affection there but I can't tell. Their relationship is murky, lake water agitated with silt. Post-wretched winter, early spring, it's unusually sunny and we sit facing the door, not because we want to look out but because if we sit the other way our screens will be unreadable and that won't work. Greg O'Brien is married to his laptop. This, he tells me, is profoundly irritating to his human wife, Mary Catherine, which is one thing we have in common: neither of us can get away with typing while talking with our spouses without a fight.

However, whereas my attachment to the screen is merely annoying, Greg's is pragmatic. Greg O'Brien has Alzheimer's disease. Except for the times when this plug he is describing to me over coffee unpredictably comes undone; then, Alzheimer's has Greg O'Brien. Meet the demon sitting with us at the table, the one being circumnavigated as I compose an e-mail to Greg. Meet the scourge of his life, and, in some ways, he tells me, its redeemer.

Conductor, I write in the subject line. In the body of the e-mail I write, *Look it up*.

When the lights go out, there is no language, O'Brien tells me. He sets his coffee down and starts to type. "I play word charades on Google. I get a silhouette, a shadow of a word but I can't hear it or define it. *Sounds like*... I keep looking for the words until I find the right one, the way a bad typist hunts and pecks for keys. I hunt and peck for words."

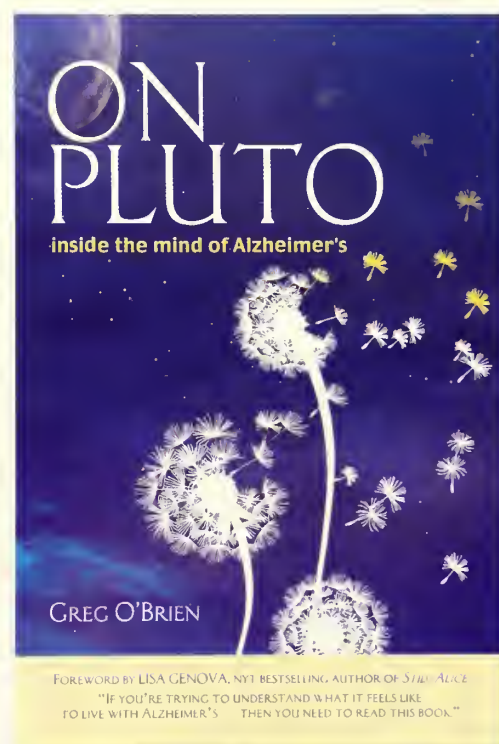
"Aphasia," I say.

"Aphasia," he says. "Good word. Send that to me. Say, *Look this up*."

I send him the e-mail.

"It's like talking to someone in Braille," he laughs, "isn't it?"

I look it up. *Aphasia*: a broad category of language impairments that affect one's ability to speak, write, and understand language, both verbal and written. Greg O'Brien is a writer with aphasia. And that's not all. Alzheimer's is a mind-thief, a brain-shrinking ray gun, every cheesy 1950s sci-fi cliché rolled into one, for real. It takes whatever filters you may have had and zaps them, *poof*, which is why people afflicted with the disease can appear by turns childlike or mean. "A fish rots from the head down," O'Brien the journalist writes in his book *On Pluto: Inside the Mind of Alzheimer's* (Codfish Press, 2014). Lucky for him, O'Brien has never been drawn to the surface of things, preferring to delve underneath for what is hidden, which is what first drew him to journalism. Story, he tells me, ideas. A



newspaperman's newspaperman, he cut his teeth on the five W's, which he enlists now in his fight against The Demon from the moment he wakes up: where am I, who am I, what is happening to me, and why is it happening, and when did it start? (On some days, bad ones, when will it end?)

"My brain was once a file cabinet, carefully arranged in categories, but at night as I sleep, it's as if someone has ransacked the files, dumping everything onto a cluttered floor." *Bed*, he ticks off, *glasses*, *Alzheimer's*, keeping his eyes shut until the rudiments of self are parsed and put away. This is what it takes for Greg O'Brien to resume his life every day. The toiletries in his bathroom

are affixed with labels written in bold letters: mouthwash, toothpaste, soap. "I've brushed my teeth with liquid soap more than once," he says.

"The word 'dementia' is onomatopoeia, a word that conjures up a sound—in this case, a howl in the night or biblical images of a demonic maniac, a portrait that no one wants to own," O'Brien writes in his book. Demon be damned, he's still got it, eyed by women as he goes to the counter for his third cup of coffee, a striking sixty-five in a fine pressed shirt: graying blond hair, windblown, ruddy, trim, radiant as if he's just stepped off a schooner from Nantucket. He pours cream and sugar, stirs, takes a sip.

"Part of the deal with Alzheimer's is that you don't sleep," he says when he sits back down. "Even

when you're losing the game, lying down is a position of defeat. Two nights ago, I didn't sleep at all. . . but my body has taught me that it's important to rest, so I just lie there. I try to relax and think of things that calm me down. Or I'm up walking around the house, pacing, thinking, why the fuck am I pacing? Sometimes it's productive—I'll write or take notes—I wake up and e-mail myself thirty times things I'm afraid I'll forget when I wake up in the morning. As your memory fades, you fear that you too will be forgotten. More important, that you won't be relevant. I don't care if people remember who I am, but I want them to remember things I've said or done that helped them think of things they might do. That's why I became a writer, to have an effect on the world, to leave an imprint. At the end, any effect I've had on the world is more important to me than who I am. I can lose my sense of self, but if I still stay relevant I'm in the moment (*relevance as connected to being present in the moment*). And my only expression for relevance is in writing. I still feel relevant in what I write."

In the failing of memory, of frontal cognition, how is he able to write? A hundred e-mails a day, a thousand Post-it notes, the demon by turns appeased, distracted, unrelenting. "Memory is everything, except it's not. Memory is the political correctness of the heart," he says. "Writing is a more soul-searching process now, no longer filtered through the head but rather the heart. It's the difference between using a thesaurus and writing a poem. Alzheimer's is making me into a poet."

He stops talking, types, begins again. "When I

was in the fourth grade, Sister Trebius would take me aside and say, *Don't you ever forget this: at some point in your life you're going to be called upon to do something significant*. In Alzheimer's, I'm finding it. It's a spiritual battle I'm in," he tells me. "As I pursue the source of good, the pushback grows. Is Alzheimer's The Demon or the expression of The Demon? I don't know." (*The Demon as Satan*, I think, looking at Greg O'Brien across the table from me, furiously typing on his keyboard again, the most powerful of God's cherubs, a fallen, petulant, greedy angel.)

"It is the robbing of the essence, the loss of self, of self-esteem. But the robbing of ego is not the robbing of the self. The self exists somewhere else, and I am in pursuit of that. Right now, this is what I know: I would have no passion or desire to live if I weren't writing. As the memory lapses increase, I step up my art. The day I can't write anymore—the day I can't write anymore is the day I head home." He stops typing and looks at me.

"There is purpose in a driven life, but then the purpose ends," he says. "You're in the cellar of your house and all of a sudden the lights go out. You believe if you stand there long enough, sooner or later, the lights will come back on. For me, one of these days. . . ." ■

MELANIE BRAVERMAN is cofounder of the Alzheimer's Family Support Center of Cape Cod, and curator of the upcoming benefit auction *Object/Memory/Object*, a collection of one-of-a-kind handmade books by artists and writers in collaboration, September 4–6, 2015, at the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown.

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I think we shrink from the immensity of the purpose we are here for."*



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FOREWORD BY MICHAEL KLEIN

I READ POETRY to stay awake. Awake meaning access to a certain secret about being alive; a way of seeing things in the dark. I also read poetry to feel what time it is. How the *right now* of the poem being written informs the mind through image and longing.

The poems that I selected here are filled with so much beauty and seeing that on first reading I was so startled that I had to read them again immediately to make sure I knew what they were; and then, again, the next day, to go deeper with them. And they stayed with me and still stay.

They're different from each other, of course. But they all speak to the presiding and sometimes difficult and lonely fact that we are here to watch each other live and die. These are all poems that are in many ways about the planet that we are living on and its trouble and its beauty. But they also seem to be bound by one recurring image, an image I couldn't make disappear from my mind when I was reading them: someone looking down from very far away, perhaps from another time, and saying, Look! My God! There are people down there.

Matthew Lippman

Schnitzel

I tried to get my head around peace.
Then I threw the tape dispenser out the window.
It hit Gerald Stern in the head
but he was in New Jersey.
My imagination gets the best of me
when the firecrackers blow up
and my daughter freaks out.
She wants peace.
She wants Gerald Stern to eat schnitzel with us on Friday night.
Mostly she wants her mother to wrap blankets around her ankles
when winter arrives.
What if the Nazis came back?
The Cossacks?
The white people up against the black people
and the Turks and Armenians
not to mention
and not to mention
and not to mention.
It's enough to make your head go to church and your face to shul.
Enough to make your eyes braid themselves into the break of a wave
and your lungs to forget how to breathe.
Still, I tried to figure peace out.
Gerald Stern tried to figure peace out.
He's in the breeze now hurling obscenities at crazy drivers
who speed up the street in BMWs and Volkswagen Jettas.
He's parking his tongue between the raspberry bush and the weeds.
My daughter goes out to meet him
but he's gone
and when will the next burning log rain down on our heads?
I can get my mind around a world with burning logs
but not the other thing,
a world with campfire benches and fire.
That's where people just sit together,
tell stories,
sing songs,
look up at the sky until it gets stupidly quiet.
That's what I can't get my mind around
the stupid quiet that everyone enchants.
Oh Gerald Stern,
oh wild silence.

Joan Larkin

Singapore

Ice clouds rose in a glass.
A ghost mushroom floated
in clear broth. Eel-streaked
pillows of eggplant like our

flesh. The marina darkened
under its gemstone necklace.
A flash turned a child rising
from the pool, fungus-white.

Many-mouthed quiet. Malay.
Mandarin. Singlish. Tamil.
I hardly know where I am,
tasting green Cambodian fire,

opening a hinged valve
to its scar. Swallowing silk.

Mark Conway

in the pines

the world is fire / again
 today: summer pours through
 my eyes / ignites
 behind the face
 of everyone we meet...
 then glances off
 my shining business-
 suit of light ::
 – july –
 silkscreened to
 the skin...

 our bedroom's flap-flap fan
 wastes all
 the requisitioned wind :
 long-day sun
 drinks gin :: then burns the dawn to stumps...
 my seven souls lie down –
 overheated from the past /
 good dogs –
 they pant off in the pines ::
 children burn through
 another week of empty street / make us
 trek to hermit's point
 where we throw ourselves into
 the unspeakable:
 the local unclean lake

 the small ones – bored –
 head up the beach / dripping off their fire ::
 here is the new love;
 always the old love

Ada Limón

Mowing

The man across the street is mowing 40 acres
 on a small lawn mower. It's so small, it must
 take him days, so I imagine that he likes it. He
 must. He goes around each tree carefully. He
 has 10,000 trees; it's a tree farm, so there are so
 many trees. One circle here. One circle there. My
 dog and I've been watching. The light's escap-
 ing the sky, and there's this place I like to stand,
 it's before the rise, so I'm invisible. I'm stand-
 ing there, and I've got the dog, and the man is
 mowing in his circles. So many circles. There
 are no birds or anything or none that I can see.
 I imagine what it must be like to stay hidden,
 disappear in the dusky nothing and stay still in
 the night. It's not sadness, though it may sound
 like it. I'm thinking about people and trees and
 how I wish I could be silent more, be more tree
 than anything else, less clumsy and loud, less
 crow, more cool white pine, and how it's hard
 not to always want something else, not to just
 let the savage grass grow.

Bruce Smith

Two Poems

Sometimes the clouds are at one remove from experience and sometimes they appear above the smoke of the rocket strike on the school as if they were contractors, defenders of the old regime that brought art to the citizens as it enslaved them, darkening their meals, cooling their loving in the heat after which they fought about money and went outside where they were redacted.

Whose treaty was torn-up to make home of some downslide hills and waste from Crucible Steel that irradiates the waters of the lake that glows in my dream of magical kindness? Bees pollinate the pools. In the run off election between loneliness and enlargement, loneliness wins and installs a shadow government of big lots and small purchases from which to kiss in the rain.

Bruce Snider

Homo

—*The Hall of Human Origins, Smithsonian Museum of Natural History*

I love you as one grown man can love another in this room of tooth-nicked skullcaps, ridged doors to instincts, hunger. Pinned to walls, the bone sockets flash black: *Erectus*, *Sapiens*. We stand near hand-axe, cut spine—*Floresiensis*, *Neanderthal*—grooves notched into pelvic bowl, spot-lit ribs, heart's ornament and armor. This, the sign says, means evolution: spear tips nudging crumbled bridal wreathes, flint knives near mating-beads on wire. All morning, we walk hand in hand, passing leopard skins, human skins, men huddling over split logs, learning to make fire.

Liz Rosenberg

Rules for Widowhood, #44

I dreamed that someone else bought the milk
 And I was pleased, in that mild, surprised way one is,
 To see the new milk in the fridge. One task I need not do.
 One worry lifted. But that was only a sleeping dream.
 No one else is buying the milk.
 No one is mowing the lawn, on the other end of the phone
 There's no one who's always glad it's me.
 No one is dropping off, or picking up,
 Or straightening the covers on the bed.
 The bed is where I'll lie alone till I am laid atop
 My love, a handful of bone, a fistful of ash—
 And for none of this must I feel self-pity.
 For I was made for happiness.
 In the dream, the cartons of milk sat side by side,
 In solid, quiet confidence. Touching.
 The old beside the new, a pair.

Chase Twichell

Buzzyboy

Buzzyboy's right on schedule:
 at the public boat launch, gassed up
 and in the water by 4:20 every afternoon.
 He does tricks for a couple of hours—
 tight figure 8's so he can hit
 his own wake
 twice, using the up-kick to flip entirely,
 the two of them one circle, him and his
 beautiful sleek black seal of a machine.

I watch him with binoculars
 from the twenty-second floor.
 I can also look directly down
 into the Yacht Club's white precincts,
 its sixty white sea-houses
 tethered in their slips,
 and one wooden cabin cruiser from the 1950's,
 dark among the icebergs.

In one white porthole,
 different roses every night.
 White t-shirts and shorts
 pass origami-flower hors d'oeuvres,
 bright petals to eat.

Watch out, there's a lot of broken glass
 by the boat launch. Big weekend out there
 on the water, tourists and locals both.
 They all leave their shopping carts
 in the parking lot for someone to pick up.
 But who? Underlings from Big Market,
 of course. Cart jockeys. Jobs.

Tony Leuzzi

Novaya Zemlya

Lately, I've been thinking again about Novaya Zemlya—
that boomerang-shaped archipelago jutting up from mainland Russia
like a plume from the hat of one of Chekhov's Vankas
or a molted quill writing steel vessels trapped in ice
while radioactive reindeer scatter scarred mountains and plains.

I used to see it as a crooked finger rising out of the Arctic
beckoning me with the promise of two
bright bungalows in a prairie of red grass, one department store
in Belushya Guba selling Robin's egg blue bowlers
until dignified doctors insisted on black, because
black is forever, like the Widow Unn and her thirty-two owls—
one stacked on top of the other as a breathing totem pole.

I imagined people from the north island of Severny having nothing
to do with people from the south island of Yuzhny
and if it weren't for the Matochkin Strait between them
they'd have slaughtered each other years ago. My first story was
Thomas of Severny pining for Rita from Yuzhny.
A polar bear named Isaac carried their forbidden letters
back and forth on his four-sailed schooner. Isaac didn't mind
playing pander, though there was nothing
Thomas or Rita could do except fast each morning.
Over time, both found themselves falling for Isaac, upholding
the grand fiction of their starving ardor
that he could continue from one to the other.

At seven, I received a Rand McNally map of the world
and was instantly drawn to places near the margins:
Svalbard dangling over Norway like a sprig of mistletoe—
New Zealand falling back from Australia like an astronaut from
his shuttle—
and, of course, Novaya Zemlya, that Cezanne brush stroke, dash
of jaunty elegance, a scythe cutting water, an open
parenthesis, as if the Kara Sea began a dream that would not end.
Someday I'd live there in absolute splendor, separated
but close enough for weekend trips to Finland. I would build
my own house
a green, three-storey colonial
with white trim and a balcony facing Murmansk. I would

bed all winter with Jack the Husky, two puffins
named Walter and Anne, and that unnamed goat
from a page in Crusoe, before Crusoe could strangle it.

By suspending "now," dismissing its facts,
there was a place I could live and belong in the world.

On March 03, 1984, I delivered a five-minute oral report
on the indigenous Nenets, those brown hunters
of foxes and seals who come and go
with the turning of weather. We had to pick an island cluster.
Jason chose Hawaii, Michael Indonesia, Jennifer
Galapagos, No one cared what anyone found.

On July 17, 1596, Dutch explorer William Barents said
you could talk to God in Novaya Zemlya, for He
would hide in such a place, withholding His secrets
from cities and men. Barents overwintered there, spooning
heated cannonballs until he died
the following June. Michael covered civil war. Jennifer
rambled on about turtles. Years later, when I read
Kurt Vonnegut, I thought of her standing before us
in a plaid jumper sweating like a Slavic wrestler. O, the tears
we might have wept! But Jason sneezed
which made us laugh. "I did it for her," he whispered
in my arms while I dreamed. "She couldn't bear
another second."

On October 30, 1961, Khrushchev ordered the detonation
of Tsar Bomba, the largest nuclear weapon
in human history. 500 miles away 24 Soviet soldiers
watched from a shore of the Arkhangelsk Oblast, their stiff
cocks standing at full attention as a ball of fire
turned to cloud and tore at pleasure with rough strife.

IMDb says *Novaya Zemlya* is a bleak thriller. A group
of prisoners are spared state sanctioned death for the sake
of a social experiment. All goes horribly wrong
the way social experiments do at 74° N which is why,
instead of watching it, I began my own experiment

called Novaya Zemlya, but was neither suited nor inclined to meet the architectonic challenges of novel writing. I remember my terrific first sentence: "Here there would be no weddings or football." But when I considered 2,500 people eking existence in government bunkers, I felt something—not quite guilt, closer to compassion—and saw me presiding over why-not weddings, structuring game days for rudderless children.

Maybe, if I'd turned the novel upside down I could have finished it, but I'm more of a poet. When I stand this poem on its head, I remember my father planting eight silver maples at the edge of our land. He knows he is dying (eleven months the doctor says) but keeps this morsel to himself. March rain. I shiver beside him, wishing I hadn't insisted on holding his shovel each time he bends down to mix peat with soil. Three years after his exit, what he planted will be twice as tall, branches extending so wide the trees will begin to touch one another. They will never be silver.

When I tip this poem on its side, I am stepping my name in snow, asking myself if someone somewhere else is, too, wondering what I will do now that I know I am and always will be lonely. I don't imagine I will cry, since loneliness is a nesting doll, a white angel in a red devil and inside the angel a tiny apple painted gold. Lately, I've been thinking about rectangular suns, the high refraction of light between atmospheric thermoclines, of horizon warped as hourglass—in other words Art. The world needs more rectangular light, more orange rivers, purple leaves, more folded homes and pocket cliffs. More silver.

When I stand this poem on its feet it asks a riddle: How do you find your way out of the forests of Novaya Zemlya?

Hugh Seidman

Lava

Six-month, street-ditched tot.
Psycho Mom walks off.

ECT tit swapped for Dad.
Talk about mixed metaphor!

Shocked Mom comes home.
Babe's bed at parents' bulb.

Past it, Freudian strobe.
Had that shut sonny up?

Did not talk until three.
Doc said: a spew, if ready.

Yes—fire-smart, avid.
Cooled to paradox of rock.

Yet Mom spat: rotten brat.
E.g., babe nixes galoshes.

But—why not rebirth?
Not the re-screwed watts.

Stubborn rubbers jabber?
Either way, whacked Pompeii.

Martha Rhodes

Ascension

Rose, the mother,
as her child rose,
up into the trees,
with her shattered child.

In her arms, the broken child.
“Don’t go, don’t go,” cries
of the husband. “Don’t
leave me. I can’t bear it,”

though surely he could
come if he wanted,
she thought, he could
will himself up, up, to join

them, his small family.
John! But there he stands,
smaller and smaller, “Look
darling child, there’s your father.

Now shut your eyes and forget him.”

Andrea Cohen

Station

If you’d asked,
as we sat

in a spring rain
of racing blossoms

at the station,
who do you love?

I’d have said:
I love the you

already on the train.
But that’s a you

who didn’t ask—I
loved her too.

Michael Klein’s fourth book of poetry and prose is *When I Was a Twin* (Sibling Rivalry Press, 2015) and there is new work appearing in the *Oxford American*, *Slice*, *Ploughshares*, and *Poetry* magazine. He teaches in the MFA Program at Goddard College and at Hunter College, and lives in New York and Provincetown.

Andrea Cohen’s poetry has appeared in the *New Yorker*, the *Atlantic*, the *New Republic*, *Poetry*, the *Threepenny Review*, and elsewhere. Her books include *Furs Not Mine* (Four Way Books); *Kentucky Derby* and *Long Division*, both from Salmon Poetry; and *The Cartographer’s Vacation* (Owl Creek Press). She directs the Writers House at Merrimack College and the Blacksmith House Poetry Series in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Mark Conway is completing his third book of poems with the working title *the blue father*. Other poems have appeared in the *Paris Review*,

American Poetry Review, *Slate*, *Ploughshares*, *Kenyon Review Online*, *Iowa Review*, *Boston Review*, and *BOMB*.

Joan Larkin’s fifth book of poems, *Blue Hanuman*, was published by Hanging Loose Press in 2014. Her previous work includes *My Body: New and Selected Poems* (Hanging Loose, 2007), recipient of the Publishing Triangle’s Audre Lorde Award, and *Legs Tipped with Small Claws*, an Argos Books hand-sewn chapbook (2012). Her honors include the Shelley Memorial Award and the Academy of American Poets Fellowship. A teacher for many years, she recently served as Conkling Writer in Residence at Smith College.

Tony Leuzzi has written three books of poetry, including *Radiant Losses* (New Sins Press, 2010) and *The Burning Door* (Tiger Bark Press, 2014). In 2012, BOA Editions released *Passwords Primeval*, Leuzzi’s interviews with twenty American poets.

Ada Limón is the author of three books of poems. Her fourth book, *Bright Dead Things*, is forthcoming from Milkweed Editions. She teaches at New York University, Columbia University, Queens University of Charlotte, and the Provincetown Fine Arts Work Center. She lives in Lexington, Kentucky; Sonoma, California; and Brooklyn, New York.

Matthew Lippman is the author of four poetry collections: *Salami Jew* (Racing Form Press, 2015); *American Chew*, winner of the Burnside Review Press Book Award (Burnside Review, 2013); *Monkey Bars* (Typecast Publishing, 2010); and *The New Year of Yellow*, winner of the Kathryn A. Morton Poetry Prize (Sarabande Books, 2007). He is the recipient of the 2014 Anna Davidson Rosenberg Poetry Award, and the Jerome J. Shestack Poetry Prize from the *American Poetry Review*.

Martha Rhodes is the author of four collections of poetry, most recently *The Beds*. She is on the faculties of the MFA Program for Writers at Warren Wilson College and Sarah Lawrence College. She also teaches at the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown. She is the director of Four Way Books, a literary publisher in NYC.

Liz Rosenberg is the author of award-winning books of poetry and novels, most recently *The Moonlight Palace*, a #1 Amazon best seller. She teaches at Binghamton University. Her husband and lifelong love, David Bosnick, passed away last year.

Hugh Seidman has published six poetry collections. His awards include the Yale Series of Younger Poets Prize for *Collecting Evidence* (1970) and the Green Rose Prize for *Somebody Stand Up and Sing* (2005). He was trained in mathematics and theoretical physics, and currently works as a technical-writing consultant.

Bruce Smith is the author of six books of poems, most recently, *Devotions*, a finalist for the National Book Award, the National Book Critics Circle Award, the LA Times Book Prize, and the winner of the William Carlos Williams Award.

Bruce Snider is the author of the poetry collections *Paradise, Indiana* and *The Year We Studied Women*. His poems have appeared in *The Best American Poetry 2012*, *American Poetry Review*, *Poetry*, *Ploughshares*, *VQR*, and *Gettysburg Review*. A former Wallace Stegner fellow and Jones Lecturer at Stanford University, he's currently an assistant professor at the University of San Francisco.

Chase Twichell's most recent book is *Horses Where the Answers Should Have Been: New and Selected Poems* (Copper Canyon Press, 2010), which won both the Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award and the Balcones Poetry Prize. She splits her time between Miami and the Adirondack Mountains of upstate New York.



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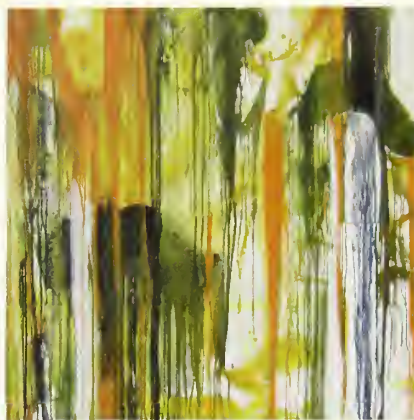
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Poets and Poems on Family

Silent No More

UNLOCKING VOICES OF OLDER POETS



EDITED BY PETER SAUNDERS, PhD

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JAMES JONES AWARD WINNER



Cam Terwilliger PHOTO BY CARA BLUE ADAMS

Set in New York and Québec during the French and Indian War (1754–1763), Yet Wilderness Grew in My Heart centers on Andrew Whitlaw, a gentleman physician who, after a ruinous attempt to found New York's first medical college, must return to his family's manor in the Hudson Valley. The plot follows our narrator as he grows embroiled in his brother's obsessive pursuit of a counterfeiter operating between New York and Canada on Mohawk Native American land, while the themes investigate how European settlers clashed and combined with Native Americans, giving rise to the North America we know today.

Yet Wilderness Grew in My Heart seeks to reenvision novels such as The Last of the Mohicans, destabilizing American mythology and the traditional views surrounding race, colonization, and cultural intermingling. That said, I feel strongly that the heart of my novel is not to educate its reader, but rather to tell an active, compelling story, focusing on the individual experiences of the characters and providing the human-scale desires and disappointments that make historical fiction more than an exotic field trip to the past.

To achieve this effect, I use primary source research as raw material, sifting through volumes of newspapers, diaries, and travelogues in search of emotionally resonant details: concrete, sensory traces of the human experience that make historic material feel immediate. Drawing on the relations of Jesuit missionaries, the travelogues of naturalists, the diaries of slaves, newspaper advertisements of the time period, and material collected from several months interviewing Mohawk experts at the Kahnawà:ke Mohawk Reservation outside Montréal, I've sought to conjure a highly realistic world as viewed through one individual's eyes.

Yet Wilderness Grew in My Heart

By Cam Terwilliger

September 1757

Hudson Valley, New York

The one named William Bell is my brother's latest fixation. Every few days, hired men ride to the manor and our servants show them to the drawing room, where Upton awaits their news by the fire. Bell is a counterfeiter. And a good one. When Upton dispatches his men to the foothills of Kinderhook to search the caves where the man is supposed to turn out his miraculously accurate notes, the sites

are empty. There is, as Upton says, nothing but a few cracked printing plates left on the ground, as though to taunt him. I've seen the plates myself. They are copper. Dried indigo ink clings to their grooves, an engraving of a note of credit spread over the slick, ruddy surface. The left side displays the royal seal of New York—except backward—the white man and the Indian transposing themselves to opposite sides of the windmill crest. It is expertly duplicated. Even the warning below is perfect: *'Tis Death to Counterfeit.*

There seems to be an endless supply of men from Bell's gang who wish to inform on him, to collect the fantastic sum that Upton has posted as a reward for his capture. It is always the same. They lead Upton's men to the hideout. They find nothing of value—the ashen remains of a fire, another plate possibly. A few months later the informer will be found dead, his chest decorated grimly by the gash of a pistol ball or dagger. It happens in taverns. It happens on the road. It happens, and it happens again. No one ever complains. Nobody seems to miss these scurf-ridden men.

The reason Bell so galls my brother is not that he is a source of lost income—though there is that. I know the truth. Bell is the first problem my brother has been unable to master in his life. He's always lived in the same manner, a manner that enables him to win games of cards with the Livingstons or Van Rensselaers. To him, the world is a puzzle about to be solved. How to gain? How to gain? The answers appear in an ever-renewing cycle of visions, a hand of cards to be played then redrawn. Consider this: he appeals to the king to send him a village of Hanoverians. The Germans, once settled in the valley, build his timber mill on the shore of the Hudson and, throughout the year, Upton will lecture incessantly on timber, its value, the mechanics behind its cutting, its treatment, its shipping. Then, by the turn of the season, he will be bored by it. Next it will be iron. Next, grain. He follows an enterprise relentlessly and then, one morning, for no particular reason, he will awake,

wash his face in the basin, look over the hills to the forest, and find that his mind has flitted, irrevocably, in some new direction. On that morning at breakfast, he will coolly appoint John Ransom, his overseer, to take charge of the task, or to delegate it still further down the hierarchy. He will act as though he never wanted a timber mill at all.

William Bell is the only interest that seems to last. Perhaps this is because Bell—the unsolvable riddle—provides an unending distraction from the actual danger we face. By this point, we all know the war with France is going poorly, the frontier to the north and west rolling back every month like a bloody scroll. Québec, the place that had once seemed so distant, now appears in our imaginations as the maw of an insatiable animal. Just this summer, the French and their natives razed the timber bastions of Fort William Henry, leaving nothing but a half-ton of ash at the foot of our northern lake. After losing their homes, and in many cases their families, the Abenaki paint their bodies vermilion and black, preparing to lope through our forests. They will search for captives. They will come for women and children to replenish their ravaged people, the families now riven with disease, with bloodshed, with enslavement to rum. Every week, we see settlers from the north floating down the Hudson, possessions piled hastily on their flat-bottomed bateaux. At times, their only cargo is the dead. Once I saw a woman crying over a pair of dead girls, their bodies laid side by side on her raft like nothing more than burlap

sacks of grain. Above them, the woman flailed at a tangle of flies.

To take our minds from the ravages of war, we do our best to concentrate on mundane things. Today, in the morning's first rays of light, while Upton scrutinizes his ledgers at his desk, I sit in the ladder-back chair to study anatomy manuals, retracing the bodily geographies I already know for the lack of something more productive to do. Upton may pass an hour brooding over the precisely etched numbers that populate the columns of his account, the long history of credit that his three sons—his agents in New York—have accrued from the material shipped to the city, then to England, then all over the world. Every few pages, he will sigh with exasperation and slash his quill through a line—some item from the depot that a farmer purchased with a forged bill.

"I'll see him twisting from the gibbet before the year is out," he says.

Upton does not have to specify who.

"You'll be lucky if you catch him alive at this point," I say. "And besides—you'll forget about him once you finally get bored. Just as you do with everything else."

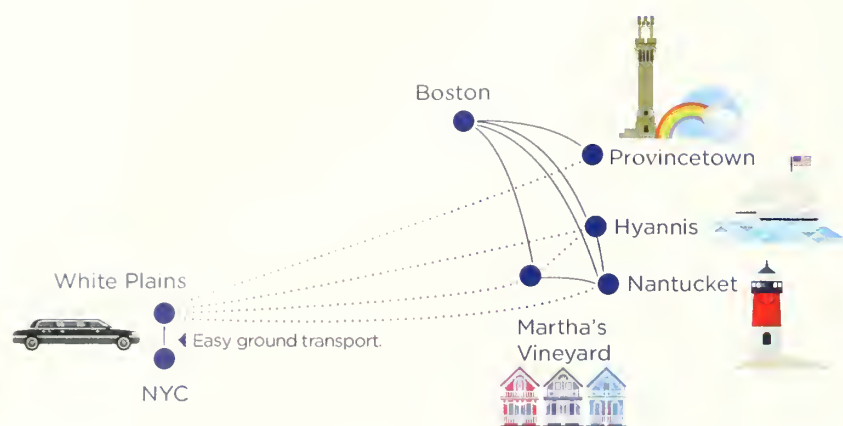
"You think you know me so well."

"I ought to."

At forty-five, Upton is three years older than me. The truth is we've been arguing all of our lives.

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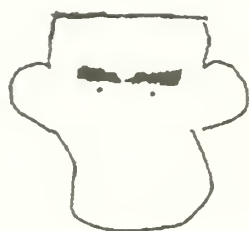


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OLD SOLDIERS NEVER DIE.
THEY WRITE NOVELS.

James Jones

"This business with Bell is different," he says. "I'll see him in court. And then I'll see him hang. You can depend on that." He closes the leather-bound ledger with a thump. A few motes of dust burst from its pages. "Have I ever told a lie?"

He casts his gaze to meet mine, then looks down the brass buttons of my waistcoat to the sheaf of rag paper in my lap, a collection of notes for a treatise I am writing about Indian medicine. Upton appraises it as though it were a bar of pig iron going to waste. I've been at the manor for a year now, while Upton keeps my creditors at bay. The answer to his question, of course, is no.

"I have a novel idea, Andrew," Upton continues. "If you ever reopen that medical school you spent all your money on, you could take Mr. Bell for a cadaver. Dissect him. Put the spleen and the liver in separate jars for posterity—or whatever it is that you and those esteemed gentlemen do."

"You know we dissect them for future diagnosis."

"That's right," he says. "The advancement of quackery is rather painstaking."

As Upton's dependent, what annuity I am granted from the Whirlaw estate is small. And what I have, Upton believes I have squandered. It is difficult to argue. In the west of Manhattan, the clapboard sign of the building that I planned to be my academy, the first of its kind in our colony, has been taken down. On the post near its door, a new sign advertises a boarding house for free Africans.

Instead of carrying on this line of conversation, I twist up a smile and return to the stack of paper in my lap.

"Looking at your Indian grimoire again?" Upton asks.

"Yes."

"You know a man's gone lunatic," he says, "when he's chasing after Indians for advice on anything but the trails."

"I suppose you must know. You are the lord of the manor. Not me."

"Don't be cross." He writes a note in the column of his account. "By the way, who is that Indian I've seen you speaking with these last few months?"

"It's Seth from the Schoharie," I say. "You remember. The son of the old chief."

"I didn't recognize him," Upton says, frowning. "He's a man now. I don't think I've seen him since he was fifteen."

"He only returned last year. He'd been living in Canajoharie. Then he went to England. He was part of some delegation of the chiefs."

"Strange times," Upton says.

I do not elaborate for fear of mockery, but I have asked Seth to teach me the Mohawk language. I'm lucky to have met him. He's as curious about the manor as I am about Native medicine since he recently embarked on a project to modernize his village. Without Upton's consent, I have shown Seth the mechanics of our flour mill. I have also provided him the address of a commodities dealer in New York that might be willing to trade directly with Indians.

"Would you care to provide me with an anatomical opinion, Andrew?" Upton's worn blue eyes

are relaxed, propped open quizzically, like a cat as it toys with an injured sparrow. "Do you think a criminal like Bell has a heart at all?"

"It would be about the size of yours," I say. "A bit bigger, perhaps."

I bathe and spend the rest of the evening in my chamber inspecting the state of my syphilitic sores, the very reason I have closed my academy and returned home in disgrace. Of course, they are no different than they were in the morning. I stand before a circular looking glass and the lesions stare back like a three-eyed beast beneath my collarbone. Each is a hardened ulcer surrounded by an orbit of flush and perishing skin. They appear and disappear in no discernible pattern. Currently, I am stronger than I have been in months—though I doubt I will achieve a full recovery. A syphilitic pox is not something with which one carries on a yearly dalliance and survives. Any time I think I will take my small inheritance and decamp for Manhattan to light the corridors of my empty school, it returns. My skin catches fire and the lesions open: my body's answer to the question of hope.

Many times I have sat at my desk to watch mercury collect into glimmering beads on my chemist tray. A perfect element, its droplets trace the tributaries of a palm so gracefully that it seems a shame to transform it into medicine, to bind it with salt and grind it to powder. Yet this is the prescribed treatment for this ailment—for good or for ill. As a young man, I took the salt straight. In more recent years, I included a confection of lavender and powdered licorice. As of now, I have ceased mercury entirely. All my records suggest my years of treatment have been ineffective. And I cannot bear the scent any longer. It reminds me too much of the past.

The chill of autumn creeps through the room, and after an hour of lying, nearly dozing, my body snaps to attention for no reason at all—a sudden and inexplicable fear. When I rise with a huff, I find my breath condensing in the faint outline of a fog. I sit quietly, watching it dissipate, listening for the faraway cry of Indians or the thundering cannonade of armies at war. But there is nothing.

The next day, Seth takes me to stalk deer in the Schoharie hunting ground. A mild slope that runs alongside a mountain, the region is thick with silver maple, the foliage casting a skein of shadow over the forest floor. Every spring, the Indians burn the underbrush, and the hunting ground now resembles a palace of trees. Corridors run between them wide enough for carriages to pass through, maple trunks lining the trail like the columns of a Moorish temple.

Seth guides me to the stream and then up a series of switchback trails on the western ridge, walking with his rifle balanced in the crook of his elbow, always three steps ahead. Though the man is ten years younger than I am, his hair has

already gone brazen silver, all of it gathered in a topknot, the sides of his head entirely shaved. The years between Seth and me can be heard in my wheezing breath. While my boots thud on the trail, Seth strides the path with grace and an offhanded familiarity, like a dancer walking the rooms of his house long after the performance is over.

"How long until we find a deer, do you suppose?" I ask, unable to bear the quiet of the forest.

"If you keep making noise," Seth says, "we may never."

"I'm sorry. I didn't know. I've never been a proper hunter."

"The first part of hunting is knowing where to look for game." Seth hefts his rifle to his shoulder, a ray of light flashing on the muzzle. "The rest is silence," he adds, "to quote the Bard of Avon."

Seth has always said the best part of London is the theater. King George made a point of showing Seth's delegation the flower of English culture, and as such they were offered a box at the Theatre Royal on Drury Lane, an opulent little balcony where they could watch all the plays performed during their three-year visit. Of all the chiefs, only Seth developed a taste for it. He preferred the satires of Henry Fielding, but also came to appreciate Shakespeare and Marlowe. By the end of his sojourn, Seth was such a fixture on Drury Lane that on the night before he set sail for America, the crowd demanded that he take a bow on stage.

In a few hours Seth and I emerge from the forest into a mountaintop clearing. Once my sight adjusts to the sun, I behold a view of the valley beyond the ridge: a topography of green splashed by a few flame-colored regions, the growing wounds of autumn. It is obvious that this vista is our only consolation. We have encountered no deer. In fact, I believe we are not here to hunt deer at all. All morning, something has preoccupied Seth—as though he wishes to unburden himself of some secret, but cannot bring himself to do so.

As we smoke and eat, we talk indolently into the afternoon, each subject an attempt on my part to discern what Seth is hiding.

"Have you ever heard of the False Face Society?" I ask, testing a new avenue. "I've heard that your people's healers all join a secret society. The identity of each man is preserved by a mask of basswood he dons during ceremonies."

"Leave this topic alone, Andrew." He lifts a pipe to his lips and two tendrils of smoke exit his nostrils. "Those masks are filled with very proud, very hungry ghosts. If you don't respect a mask, it can eat you."

"I wouldn't have thought you believed in ghosts, being Christian."

"Since when do Christians fail to believe in ghosts?"

I fan myself with my tricorn, nodding amiably though I am now fully irritated. Why am I here at all? Hiking in the forest? A man under the burden of a pox, baiting his own decline? By the time I return, I know the inside of my shirt will be spattered with blood. And for what? "Is there some other subject you might prefer for conversation?" I ask. "Or have you only brought me here to waste my time?"

A powerful wind blows over the mountaintop, sending the knot of feathers and hair on Seth's head into a flutter—a silver flame. He draws on his pipe again, as if considering carefully what to say next. Finally, when the wind stops roaring in our ears, he speaks.

"The man is living with our Mohawk brothers in New France," he says. "Near the Jesuit mission, Kahnawà:ke, outside Montréal."

"Excuse me?"

"William Bell," he says. "When we received our Kahnawà:ke cousins for Green Corn Festival, they had a printing plate like your brother collects. They said Bell is lodged nearby, in Canada. I did not wish to say anything of it at first, because I know it will only cause further trouble. But this absurdity between your brother and Bell has gone on long enough. I feel I must do something."

The force and suddenness of his admission leaves me silent, my tongue straining for a response, the gulf between us suddenly revealed. It is impossible for me not to wonder what else he knows that I do not.

"And what is it that you plan to do now?"

"I wish to strike a deal with your brother," Seth says. "A gentleman's agreement about restoring the boundaries of our land to what it says in the treaties. To restore them if I can guide Lord Whitlaw to Bell, that is. I wish for you to help in brokering this agreement."

"I see."

When Upton and I were children, our father carved up this land, purchasing much of it from Seth's father. Or, rather, our father purchased a few tracts arranged in a ring, then proceeded to seize all the land in between as though he had purchased it too. Perhaps it is only for this request that Seth has cultivated my friendship. And why not? Days of my boyhood return: I still recall the great ceremony that took place between my father and the chief called King Peter, Seth's father. I see Peter reciting the terms of the agreement and my father doing the same, belts of wampum traded, then placed on a scaffold for their shell beads to gleam in the sun. In the end, they smoked from a calumet and Peter took up the contract with a satisfied solemnity. Beside my father's signature, he etched his own mark: the image of a wolf. I have no memory of Seth at the ceremony, but he must have been there: a boy of five or six. I can imagine him now, his eyes widening as our fathers conversed in a tongue he did not yet understand, all of them ignorant of the turmoil to come. ▲

CAM TERWILLIGER's writing has appeared in a number of magazines, including West Branch, Electric Literature, Post Road, and Narrative, in which he was selected as one of the magazine's "15 Under 30." In addition to the James Jones First Novel Fellowship, his fiction has been supported by fellowships and scholarships from the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, the Fulbright Program, the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, the Elizabeth George Foundation, and the American Antiquarian Society. A graduate of Emerson College's MFA program, he currently teaches at Grub Street and Coastal Carolina University.

Eugene O'Neill: A Life in Four Acts

By Robert M. Dowling

Yale University Press, 2014

A BOOK REVIEW BY DENISE DOHERTY PAPPAS

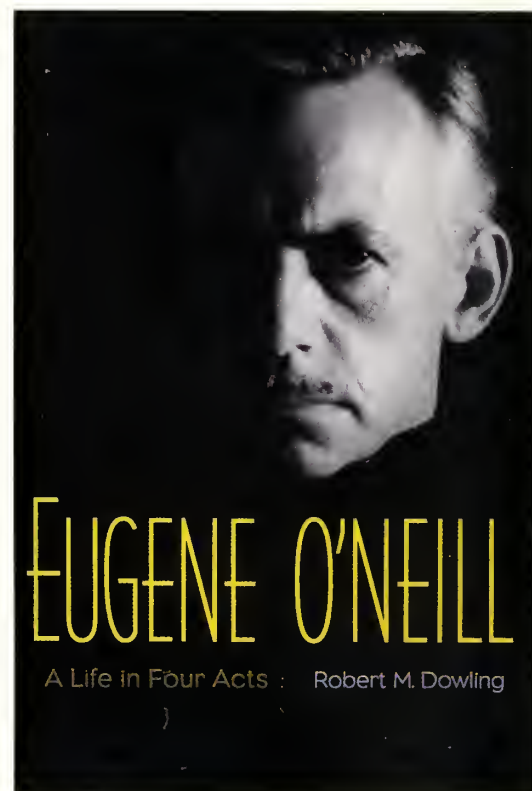
WHEN I SEARCHED for a high-school term paper topic, my Irish Catholic English teacher warned me against focusing on playwright Eugene O'Neill. "Don't go down to 'Tobacco Road,'" Miss Sharkey advised, referring to the symbol for the low-life literary territory that she, a "Lace Curtain" single woman, abhorred. "It's filled with nothing but godless alcoholics."

Years later, Robert M. Dowling, biographer and author of *Eugene O'Neill: A Life in Four Acts* from Yale University Press, received the opposite advice. "Put the man in there!" his Norman Mailer Center advisor, Dr. Deborah Martinson, boldly encouraged. While clearly enraptured by the "Prometheus of modern drama," as actor Louis Wolheim described O'Neill, Dowling dispensed with hagiography and has rendered a careful dual inventory. Admitting his subject is "not for the faint of heart," Dowling gives full credit to O'Neill as a game-changing prize-winning playwright. But he also paints an equally honest portrait of the vulnerable, sometimes charming but often cruel son-husband-father-friend who gave birth to modern drama nearly one hundred years ago on Provincetown's own Commercial Street.

Why another O'Neill biography? What could Dowling add to the dramatist's well-documented story? In his research, Dowling discovered new information about O'Neill's divorce from his first wife, Kathleen Jenkins, and his motivations for restricting production of *Long Day's Journey into Night*. He includes formerly unpublished photographs, and his book is the first to discuss O'Neill's 1919 piece *Exorcism*, a semiautobiographical work dealing with suicide and divorce. This play, thought lost, was only recovered in 2011. In his introduction, Dowling elicits comments from Tony Kushner, Cornel West, and Sinclair Lewis—praise suggesting that readers of O'Neill's life are in for a treat. Offsetting O'Neill's self-proclaimed existence as “a splendidly suffering bit of chaos,” Dowling judiciously interjects Irish humor. All is not doom and gloom in this user-friendly biography.

Over the last ten years, Dowling has written and published three scholarly books on O'Neill, including in two volumes the *Critical Companion to Eugene O'Neill: A Literary Reference to His Life and Work*, with contributions from forty experts. However, this new biography has a different audience in mind. "This book is for readers like my friends and relatives," Dowling explained in a phone interview. "I deliberately did not include critical analysis of O'Neill's work. I did not want to restrict anyone's opinion of O'Neill but instead wanted to reveal his extraordinary life in the world of the theater." Because some readers may have only a passing understanding of O'Neill's plays, Dowling carefully provides context—small tutorial digressions that educate us about the plays' topics and times. In our interview, Dowling said: "O'Neill gave a voice to the voiceless. He unleashed a sympathy for the detritus of the American social matrix. He recognized them as having serious dramas equal to those of the bourgeoisie." Dowling and O'Neill share an Irish-American heritage, a Catholic upbringing, famous ancestors, and a political and theatrical passion. A consummate teacher, Dowling constructs his biography by employing the elements of a play, explaining in his introduction: "By my count, O'Neill lived through four acts, each with its own . . . idiosyncratic episodes, characters, and mise-en-scène." Four was also O'Neill's chosen number of acts in many of his best-known plays.

Act I, "The Ghosts at the Stage Door," begins with O'Neill's family history. Eugene is cast as the second son of a famous



matinee idol, James O'Neill, an actor who sold out his fine acting skills for the cash cow of a decades-long ownership and theatrical production of the lucrative melodrama *The Count of Monte Cristo*. While he eventually enters the family business (theatercraft), Eugene vows that his plays will never be mere entertainment like his father's but will rather be experimental inquiries on hot topics, such as abortion, wage slavery, evolution, social injustice, and racism. Early on, this unwanted child is blamed for his difficult birth, which resulted in his mother's addiction to morphine. He is sent to boarding school at age seven; he experiences a loveless childhood and turbulent adolescence. He drops out of Princeton, impregnates and marries Kathleen Jenkins, flees parenthood for life in Buenos Aires, and awakens to a more purposeful life only after spending time in a TB sanitarium.

“To Be an Artist or Nothing,” Act II of O'Neill's life, begins in Provincetown, an emerging artists' colony hosting six hundred artists in the summer of 1916, as this twenty-eight-year-old washashore joins his drinking buddy Terry Carlin there for the summer. Through Carlin, O'Neill meets playwright Susan Glaspell (of *Trifles* fame) and her entourage, including George “Jig” Cram Cook, Hutch Hapgood, Neith Boyce, Jack Reed, and Louise Bryant. After a failed audition of his play *The Morie Man*, O'Neill returns with *Bound East for Cardiff*, which the players love and premiere at Mary Heaton Vorse's Wharf Theatre on July 28. Of this inaugural production, O'Neill would later say, “It can be seen, or felt, the germ of the spirit, life attitude, etc., of all my more important future work.” That same summer, O'Neill begins an affair with Louise Bryant, playwright of *The Game*, which appears on a double bill alongside O'Neill's second production, *Thirst*. The *Boston Sunday Post* takes note of the dramatist, whose work the Provincetown

Players are “confident is going to be heard from in places less remote than Provincetown.” Here, Dowling includes never-before-published photos of Bryant, Reed, and O’Neill.

An English professor at Central Connecticut State University, Dowling is adept at inserting Spark-type notes on naturalism, realism, Ibsen, and Nietzsche, providing context for O’Neill’s plays. After describing O’Neill’s alcohol consumption, Dowling shares Jack London’s definition of white logic as “the existential angst that drunkenness incurs while paradoxically making it endurable.” In 1920, Eugene’s play *Beyond the Horizon* is a huge Broadway success at the Morosco Theatre, and it wins O’Neill his first Pulitzer Prize. Nonetheless, O’Neill’s father argues: “People come to the theatre to forget their troubles. What are you trying to do—send them home to commit suicide?” O’Neill continues to pick up epithets from his critics, such as “the dean of dysfunction” and “the poet laureate of gloom.” He counters these monikers, saying, “Life is a tragedy—hurrah!” (the title of Dowling’s introduction), implying that his definition of success is bringing social problems to the stage and forcing audiences to think about matters that, until then, have been unspeakable. “Hurrah,” indeed.

Act III, “The Broadway Show Shop,” is a study in contrasts. We see O’Neill as a “tragic optimist,” staging engaging and often financially successful plays, such as *The Hairy Ape* (with Dowling’s explanation of the Industrial Workers of the World, or IWW) and *The Emperor Jones* (with Dowling’s notes on America’s military occupation in Haiti, where marines squashed a guerilla uprising from 1915 to 1934). However, in his personal life, O’Neill is miserably engaged in bitter, brutal, and brutalizing arguments with his second wife, Agnes Boulton, an author with whom he has two children, Shane and Oona. O’Neill’s set designer, Bobby Jones, says of the couple: “They are the noblest spirits there are . . . [but] . . . they know nothing about anything except suffering and hell generally.” Dowling concedes, “The stranglehold that alcoholism had taken over O’Neill by the early 1920s is nearly impossible to overstate.”

Elsewhere, Dowling describes men the Irish call “Wobblers”—domestic abusers who wreck their homes and families with their alcoholic rages. At one point, O’Neill throws Agnes’s manuscript into the fire and viciously destroys a portrait that Thomas Eakins made of her beloved father. Yet Agnes later reasons: “I think that he was hurting so much inside himself that periodically he HAD to act out. . . . If he hadn’t had his plays in which to play out his principal hatreds, I feel very sure he’d have found his way to an asylum before he was thirty.” In classic abuser style, O’Neill sent Agnes the following lines from his play *Welded*: “I love you. Forgive me for all I have ever done, all I’ll ever do.”

While he was difficult, demanding, and insensitive as a husband, O’Neill was equally loyal, committed, and vigilant when it came to his dramatic work. He created eighteen plays between 1919 and 1928, and Dowling details the enormous original stagecraft O’Neill employed in portraying his search for life’s meaning. He used masks, role reversals, doubles, tom-toms to mimic heartbeats,

industrial sound effects, drunken rages to explore stream of consciousness, and “thought asides” (speeches during which actors freeze for a fellow actor’s interior monologue). In providing these details, Dowling highlights the reasons O’Neill is such an admired playwright.

When O’Neill’s play *All God’s Chillun Got Wings* was staged, theatrical drama spilled over into O’Neill’s family life. Its theme of miscegenation was quite controversial: in 1923 racial intermarriage was illegal in thirty of the forty-eight states and the law was not dismantled nationally until 1967. Georgia’s Klan Grand Kleagle wrote to O’Neill threatening, “You have a son. If your play goes on, don’t expect to see him again.” O’Neill fired back, by return mail, “Go fuck yourself.” Just as today’s headlines are filled with reports on the controversial shooting of an unarmed black man in Ferguson, Missouri, O’Neill’s play incited discussion and dissension during the civil rights movement of the 1920s—everyone from T. S. Eliot to W. E. B. Du Bois to Adam Clayton Powell voiced a strong opinion on the play’s subject matter. As in the recent debates regarding the Metropolitan Opera’s staging of *The Death of Klinghoffer* and the Broadway play *Disgraced*, much criticism came from those who had never seen O’Neill’s play. Yet actor Paul Robeson noted: “Audiences that came to scoff went away in tears.”

Act IV, entitled “Full Fathom Five,” recalls Ariel’s song in act 1, scene 2 of *The Tempest*, wherein the bones of a presumed drowned king are changed into something of value. In 1928, in order to escape from a broken marriage, O’Neill sailed to Europe with Carlotta Monterey, an actress who had earlier starred in *The Hairy Ape*. Two weeks after the divorce from his second wife became final, O’Neill married Carlotta on July 22, 1929. Just as he had done with Agnes, O’Neill quoted from one of his plays, this time, *Lazarus Laughed*, telling Carlotta: “I am your laughter and you are mine.”

Yet readers will likely find little to laugh about as they learn about Carlotta. She was an anti-Semitic snob who tried to keep O’Neill’s family and friends away from him, and largely succeeded. Random House publisher Bennett Cerf described Carlotta as “more of a jailer than a wife.” Moreover, she was the wickedest stepmother of them all. When Shane left after a rare visit to his father at Tao House, Carlotta burned his bedsheets.

In our phone interview, Dowling described O’Neill’s rejection of his son as “abominable” and claimed that O’Neill’s treatment of his second son was perhaps the saddest part of O’Neill’s story. Like O’Neill in his youth, Shane looked to his father for guidance but was rejected or compared unfavorably with his older half-brother, Eugene Jr.—even though O’Neill had also abandoned his firstborn until Gene was eleven years old. Both sons would later commit suicide. As a “Black Irishman,” O’Neill believed that life had no meaning without a struggle and that the significance of our lives was revealed through suffering. Writing was his therapy, his way to deal with loss, to make himself less afraid of life.

As a gatekeeper, however, Carlotta kept O’Neill on task. She acted as his housekeeper, his party planner, and his girl Friday. Prompted by illness

(then thought to be Parkinson’s disease) and nearing fifty—suddenly realizing the “tyranny of time,” Dowling’s phrase for the playwright’s personal last act—O’Neill began to explore *Full Fathom Five*, the remaining story of his dead parents and brother. Despite the professional uplift of receiving the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1936, O’Neill was still searching for life’s significance, still disappointed in the American dream, calling it a failure of empty material rewards. He quoted the biblical lines from Matthew 16:26: “For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and suffers the loss of his soul?”

In 1941, physically and mentally worn out and weakened, O’Neill finished his autobiographical masterpiece *Long Day’s Journey into Night*. Only close friends were allowed to read it during his lifetime. O’Neill’s play, which reads like a classic Greek drama, takes place on a single summer day in 1912 at Monte Cristo Cottage, his family’s home in New London. Irish to the core, this autobiographical story of missed connections, disappointments, and painful memories examines grievances that had haunted O’Neill for his entire life. He placed family dysfunction at center stage, and American audiences haven’t been the same since.

O’Neill made many versions of his will, playing emotional games with his children’s financial and emotional legacies. Yet he clearly and consistently stipulated that *Long Day’s Journey into Night* could be produced—exclusively in book form—only twenty-five years after his death. Dowling, however, discovers and reveals new insights about O’Neill’s personal motivation for this time delay, as well as Carlotta’s reasons for ignoring her husband’s last wishes and granting the play’s first production three years after his death.

Sixty-five-year-old Eugene O’Neill died in Boston in 1953. While he wanted his tombstone to read “There’s a Lot to Be Said for Being Dead,” Carlotta had the last word, changing his marker to state: “Rest in Peace.” ❧

DENISE DOHERTY PAPPAS is a summer resident of Provincetown and former Mainer Center seminarian. Her biography John Simmons: The Measure of a Man describes the radical-thinking, nineteenth-century clothing manufacturer-philanthropist who endowed Simmons College in Boston.



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An Italian Wife

By Ann Hood

W. W. Norton, 2014

A BOOK REVIEW BY TAYLOR M. POLITES

IN THE OPENING STORY of Ann Hood's latest book, *An Italian Wife*, the title character, Josephine, is fourteen, a country girl in 1889 southern Italy, about to marry. Her mother informs her of her responsibilities to her husband with an example: look at what dogs do in the street. This is Josephine's sexual education. Over fourteen stories and a hundred years, Hood explores the loves, losses, and sex lives of four generations of Rimaldis in ways that are subtle, tragic, tender, titillating, hilariously absurd, and always moving. While many writers shrink from writing about sex, a notoriously difficult topic to tackle, Hood delves into this most shadowed and fundamental of human urges with relish, presenting what her characters think and feel about it as much as what they do not realize of themselves.

An Italian Wife is not a sweeping saga, but instead a series of discrete short stories focused on moments in the lives of an Italian-American immigrant family. The focus on Josephine's descendants, though, creates a sense of unity and continuity, each story offering insights into the lives of prior characters. The stories are also unified by the immigrant experience, taken from Hood's lived experience as a child in an Italian-American family in West Warwick, Rhode Island, the model for the mill town where Josephine finds herself. In another parallel, Josephine immigrates from a small village outside of Naples, mirroring the immigrant circumstances of Hood's great-grandmother. The fabric of that experience is richly explored through each generation, and with it Hood returns to the themes of loss, grief, and isolation that mark much of her work. In this collection, however, Hood deploys the lens of sexuality and sexual awareness to illuminate her characters. The sexual urge is a fundamental part of our existence, and Hood explores, without shyness or prudery, but with humor and



sincerity, the contortions and gropings that go with those urges.

Josephine does not find true love or sexual fulfillment (and in the worldview of this woman, and surely many of us today, the two are the same) until a happenstance encounter with the ice deliveryman. At this point in the book, she is an immigrant in America, burdened with a loveless marriage and six children in an Italian enclave that, for her, is not so different from the home she left behind. Josephine's adulterous affair is short lived, as the iceman dies in the influenza pandemic of 1918. Josephine makes a deal with a much-revered but secretly libertine priest to deliver the baby of this

illicit union at the hospital, pretend it has died, and give the child to adoptive parents in Vermont.

Josephine felt her body fly up to the ceiling and watched herself from some distant spot, unbuttoning the dress, unclasping the bra so that her ample breasts fell free. She watched the way Father Leone's eyes gobbled them first, before he bent to suckle them. This was all he had wanted? she found herself thinking. Just like that day in church. Again, newspaper images of the war in Europe filled her mind. All of those young boys had suckled at their mother's breasts, had grown from their milk, grown into men about to die. Josephine wrapped the priest's curls in her fingers and pulled him closer to her.

"Yes," he whispered. "Give yourself to God."

This double loss, child and lover, becomes the drumbeat for Josephine's life, and the rhythm against which the lives and loves of her children and their descendants are presented in marvelously detailed, delightful, often unsettling ways.

These stories are also carefully constructed to move the reader. The vise in which Josephine is trapped is both terrible and understandable as she urges her oldest daughter to go to the priest who earlier had exploited Josephine's weakness for his own sexual satisfaction—and, indeed, we are made to understand that he does the same with her daughter. And yet, to a woman without resources or even a voice, the priest offers the only lifeline available to her family.

Josephine sighed and looked at Elisabetta. "Go there now. Learn your Latin. Get to college."

"But it's late," Elisabetta said, even though she was grabbing her pink sweater and slipping on her shoes.

"Go to him now," Josephine said. This daughter would get out of here. She had a good head on her shoulders. She would be a scientist, like Madame Curie. . . .

"Go!" Josephine was shouting as Elisabetta gathered her things: Latin book and spiral notebook filled with verb conjugations. "Get away from here! Run to him, Elisabetta. Run!"

If any sexual relationship is one of power dynamics, those influences are on full display here, both in the ways in which the vulnerable are exploited and in the ways in which sexuality can become a tool of advantage. But Hood never leads us to believe that power exclusively is the root of sex. On the contrary, she insists that emotion, longing, love, lust, grief, all of these feelings inform desire. They drive us. They inflame that innate urge. And what do we do with those urges? We explore,



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The Letter I

By Dennis Rhodes

Chelsea Station Editions, 2014

A BOOK REVIEW BY JEFF WALT

experiment, give, regret, live in shame and loss, and try to move forward with a hard-won sense of hope and faith, as Josephine herself does.

Hood explains that these stories were originally born as tales of war. Indeed, each generation faces loss and change marked by war. Josephine's firstborn, Carmine, is forever damaged by World War I; Martha, the lost child, has lost her lover in World War II; Connie's son Davy, the light of her life, is missing, presumed dead, in Vietnam. Hood investigates the impact of these losses on the desires of her characters.


For instance, Francie, a granddaughter of Josephine's, is widowed in World War II and finds herself after the war a very attractive but lonely woman in a neighborhood of second-generation go-getters, shaking off ethnicity for the ranch-house homogeneity of the suburbs. Francie is too Italian, lusted after by the husbands, shunned by the prim wives. One by one, Francie accepts the advances of the husbands, screwing her way through the neighborhood, getting invited to neighborhood parties, and having the last laugh. A reader might be left with a certain pleasant cynicism at the comeuppance Francie is giving these wives, but in the last few lines, we see another reason for Francie's philandering, and that clear, ringing emotion turns the story on its head.

Late at night, Francie on Stan Podaski's lap. The neighborhood asleep. Tears on Stan's cheeks because he was a killer, a murderer. She tried to remember her husband. His weight on her, yes. And once, in his car by the lake, he had brought her onto his lap just like this. She remembered the steering wheel digging into her back, the shift against her hip. His face, blurry still, had once been close like this.

"Yes," she said, clutching Stan's thick shoulders.

And she saw it for an instant, her husband's beautiful face.

Trademark Ann Hood, a writer who understands how to deliver emotion right to the reader's heart.

Character by character, we see the complex matrix of identity that flows through ethnicity, family, sex, sexuality, and society. We see characters who flaunt and others who desperately bury their secrets. We wonder at the motivation that propels characters into and out of chaos. It is revenge. It is desire. It is solace. It is longing. It is curiosity. It is power. It is all these things, and Hood finds tantalizing and heart-wrenching ways to reveal the vast complexity and beauty and sadness of the secrets that her characters keep forever hidden. 

TAYLOR M. POLITES is a writer and maker living in Providence, Rhode Island, with his small Chihuahua, Clovis. Polites's first novel, *The Rebel Wife*, was published by Simon & Schuster in 2012. His articles, essays, and short stories have appeared in a variety of anthologies, magazines, and news publications.

IN A TIME WHEN poets make overtures to avoid the "I" due to fear of being labeled confessional, Dennis Rhodes forges the fast track and tells us—point-blank—the reader is in for some personal voyaging in his new book of poetry, *The Letter I*, published by Chelsea Station Editions.

Like the many handsome strangers Rhodes encounters in this latest collection, I found myself a bit dreamy eyed when I came upon the attractive book face-to-face. The book's design is conceptual; a nod to the crossword puzzles you see people doing hunched over in coffee shops, looking with deep consternation, struggling for the *exact* letter. With the book's emphasis on the iconic pronoun "I," the broader claim of self-identity is asserted before one even opens this new title.

The poet's confidence in his "I" takes sweeping ownership from the start: "Reminiscence" is secure and imperative to the darkly thematic core to which Rhodes devotes much of his attention. Here, we meet the narrator in the midst of reflecting on an anonymous sexual encounter. Stream of consciousness harks a baleful voice, which finds exploration in the retrospective/prospective form:

I knew damn well I would never
see him again. I remember
what a relief it was to see
him knotting his tie, adjusting
his belt, preparing to depart
and reclaim anonymity—

The poet keeps his promise to the "I" in this poem as we sway from the present into a specifically detailed past that includes transmitting HIV ("The Virus"), a hedonistic lifestyle in the midst of Reaganomics, and buddying up to the suits and ties of the New York City executive PR scene in the '80s ("Blame"). The middle-aged narrator meanders through awkward self-discovery with obsessive-compulsive disorder and finds life rendered unbalanced between cultivated lust and ineffable love.

Fifteen years since his first book of poetry, *Spiritus Pizza and Other Poems*, Rhodes has broadened his heartfelt voice and reaches an apex in his capable body of work: no longer covert in self-realization, he affirms the ubiquitous "I" without romanticizing candor, and flirts proudly with the zeitgeist of selfie-snapping millennials as he seemingly stands up—in a forthright stance—and captures the "I" in these poems. This maneuver first struck me as a simple act of declaration. But, more intimately, the book seizes a kind of prodding into the exploration of a life well examined. The "I" re-actualized—not idolized. A third eye peers widely through fine poems with apt images and declarations that further define the book's personality: "1980" ("... as we danced away those nights, / who knew the future

P O E T S * I N * I
T H E * C A F É S *
L E T T E R * O N *
R A I N Y I D A Y S
R E F L E C T * A M
A N D * B R O O D A
O V E R * H U M A N
D E N N I S W A Y S
R H O D E S P O E T

was so fragile?"); "September" ("The sun bleeds away, the door closes / on the mating season."); "The Poet" ("I suffer with words // and without them."); and "Brevity" ("Now my body brings / itself home alone / and I have nothing / to do with it.").

With the humorist's delight for irony, Rhodes moves from the earnest to the satirical poem "Halloween," in which we are treated to the unquantifiable fun that's achievable in verse with a portrait of sexualized vampires among frisky, costumed cops.

Consciously, the poet captures the silliness of holiday and, technically, pulls the book away from a potential lapse into melancholy that otherwise would overshadow the arc with noir. Rhodes smartly switches channels often, and wakes us up. Engaging gestures and voltas of this sort make the book, as a whole, feel defined and conspicuously show the poet at work.

The Letter I investigates our mortal fears, phobias, and delights encountered from simply walking through this world: "Pretend I'm Dead" asks, childingly, for the reader to appropriate postmortem affection. More laughter is bestowed along the way in "My Godmother," "Posing," and "Monkey Poem." Rhodes also revisits his Provincetown haunt in the nostalgic "Spiritus 1 a.m." and "Spiritus, once more," which follows the poem "What about love?" around the corner to explore the answer.

The inveterate poet imparts sage-bearing advice near the end of the book in "Warning": "You can get burned / by playing with fire. / In playing with words / the risks are higher." Emphatically, the book's journey does not merely bolster the

poems, but obviously salutes abject dedication to life's uneven travails—an acceptance that carries Rhodes's gravitas all the way through to satisfaction, to “a peculiar blessing / a singular pleasure to sleep alone.”

The Letter I is not just another pretty face on the shelf. In this collection, you hold the perpetually restless, but grounded poet who has taken

his music into the streets of Provincetown, onto the airwaves of his nine-year-old radio show at WOMR-FM, and now to a new harbor in Naples, Florida. Though Dennis Rhodes is no longer an official resident of Provincetown, part of his legacy thrives there still. And always will. Dennis is, I believe, the humanist poet who curates life with faithful determination. **X**

JEFF WALT's poetry has appeared in various journals and anthologies including the Sun, Poetry International, Alligator Juniper, Americas Review, Connecticut Review, Cream City Review, and the Good Men Project. He was recently awarded the Red Hen Press Poetry Award for 2014, and his work will appear in the Los Angeles Review in 2015.

brown girl dreaming

By Jacqueline Woodson

Penguin, 2014

A BOOK REVIEW BY CECILIA GALANTE

*My name is Jacqueline Woodson
and I am ready for the ride.*

THIS IS THE LAST LINE of “the revolution,” a section of Woodson’s highly acclaimed new memoir, *brown girl dreaming*, in which Woodson, as a young girl, compares the racial revolution to riding on a carousel:

the revolution is like
a merry-go-round, history always being made
somewhere. And maybe for a short time,
we’re a part of that history. And then the ride
stops
and our turn is over.

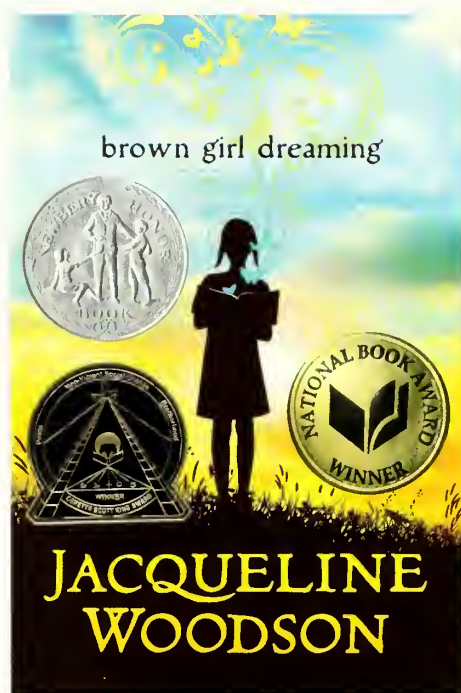
It’s a powerful image, made even stronger by the realization that a child is behind it, musing over the words. But this line could also sum up Woodson’s career as a writer, her rise to stardom in a world previously dominated by books about boy wizards and fighting teenagers, as she continues to write about race, relationships, and kids of all ages.

Woodson is the author of thirty books, and her list of awards is not for the faint of heart: four Newbery Honors (the most recent one awarded for *brown girl dreaming*), a Caldecott Medal, five Coretta Scott King Book Awards, and two National Book Awards, among countless others. She’s also been recognized in all fifty states and hundreds of schools for her contribution to children’s literature and, in the words of *School Library Journal*, her “masterful use of voice.” The book *brown girl dreaming*, however, is Woodson’s own story, her first, of growing up black in a racially divided world and finding her voice as a writer. One of the poems, titled “the beginning,” illustrates how it all started:

I cannot write a word yet but at three,
I now know the letter J
love the way it curves into a hook
that I carefully top with a straight hat
the way my sister has taught me to do. Love
the sound of the letter and the promise
that one day this will be connected to a full name,

my own

that I will be able to write



by myself.

Without my sister's hand over mine,
making it do what I cannot yet do.

How amazing these words are that slowly come
to me.

How wonderfully on and on they go.

Will the words end, I ask
whenever I remember to.

Nope, my sister says, all of five years old now,
and promising me

infinity.

Born in Columbus, Ohio, Woodson spent most of her childhood in South Carolina (where her mother was born) and Brooklyn. The dichotomy between these two living situations was not lost on her when she sat down to start work on *brown girl dreaming*, which is written completely in verse. “As I wrote in the book,” Woodson says in one of several e-mail exchanges between us, “it was crazily segregated in the South. And then New York—like

so much of this country—had this subtle unspoken segregation going on: redlining, race ghettoization, race-based educational tracking, etc. But, of course, I was a child and didn’t really know any of this in the way that kids don’t fully understand things.”

She began to learn fast. One day in particular, during a trip to Coney Island, an incident occurred that changed her forever. “I was probably about eight or nine and I was paying to get on a ride,” she says. “There was this high podium-like thing and what seemed like this huge man behind it with this handlebar mustache. As I put my hand up to put my money on the podium, he grabbed my hand and squeezed it and yelled at me to never ever try to steal his money. I was so terrified. I still remember my own hand sweating around my coins. I don’t remember anything else except crying. I didn’t know why he would think I would ever steal. But years later, once I understood how things worked in this country, it made sense to me. Here I was—this beribboned, well-dressed child trying to pay for a ride I wanted to experience, and he saw something completely different.”

Her skin color wasn’t the only thing that set Woodson apart as a child. Raised as a Jehovah’s Witness, she recalls in “flag” being sent out of her first-grade classroom during the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance at school, along with two other Witnesses:

When the kids in my class ask why
I am not allowed to pledge to the flag
I tell them *It’s against my religion* but don’t say,
I am in the world but not of the world. This,
they would not understand.

It took an unfortunate—and some would say shocking—incident at the 2014 National Book Award luncheon for Woodson to be reminded that these disparate perceptions, while not quite as dramatic, are still very much alive. Daniel Handler, better known as the author of the Lemony Snicket series of books, announced Woodson (who won the award) by saying, “Jackie Woodson is allergic to watermelon. Just let that sink in your mind.” In an interview on National Public Radio’s *Fresh Air*, Woodson explained her reaction to Terry Gross: “Looking back on it and trying to take some time to

process it all, it makes me sad that there are so many people who are not connected to the deep history of where that racial stereotype comes from. I think so much of what I've been trying to do is [show] how important history is to the context of everything so that something like that doesn't become a thirty-second joke. . . . Daniel didn't know. He just didn't get the history, and he . . . made the mistake of thinking we're beyond that, and we're not. I'm still really trying to figure it all out. . . . It's not going to end our friendship. I think he has a good heart. I think a lot of people who are ignorant have good hearts, and sometimes people make mistakes, and this is what that kind of racial mistake looks like."

Woodson's graciousness (not to be confused with tolerance) is obvious in all of her books, even as she tackles loaded topics such as interracial marriage, sexuality, and neighborhood violence. She had other intentions, however, when she decided to write *brown girl dreaming*: "I wanted to understand who my mom was before she was my mother, and I wanted to understand exactly how I became a writer. So I started researching my life, asking relatives, talking to friends, and mostly just letting myself remember." And what of the decision to write the book in verse? "It's memory," she recalls, "and this is how memory comes to me—in small moments with lots of white space surrounding it. The white space is silence—this is information I do not have to connect in a truly narrative way. So instead, the moment becomes stitched together—and that white space is part of the whole."

Woodson considers silence, or that white space, to be sacred. She writes about it at length in *brown girl dreaming*—even writing ten separate mini-poems, each only three lines long, and each titled "how to listen"—and she refers to it again in our interview: "It's a loud world. And I do think it's so loud because people are truly afraid of white space—the silence. You see the way people rush to fill silence—as though, God forbid, there's a pause. It's discomforting for so many. I don't really understand why. I LOVE silence. I love letting my mind just go where it needs to go without the hindrance of other voices. I love sitting with friends and not saying anything—just enjoying the company of a dear friend beside you."

One of the more remarkable things about Woodson's career as a writer is how much she struggled with reading as a child. In fact, it was her sister who was considered the smart one; Woodson herself had to read things over and over again for the words to make sense. How then, I wanted to know, did she fall so deeply in love with books if they were so difficult to read? "How could I not fall in love with something I spent so much time with?" she answered immediately. "And looking back, I was a very engaged reader. So by the time I had finished reading and rereading something, those words were a part of me. I have so many of the books I've written memorized or partially memorized and this comes from that way I learned to read. It's the same way I learned to write—rewriting and rereading out loud until I own the story."

Some of Woodson's creative work was completed at the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, where she spent a seven-month residency. The result was so positive, she says, that she ended

up staying in Provincetown for the next four years. "It was a life-altering experience," she adds. "Aside from meeting people who remain close friends to this day, I was able to leap into writing full-time against a backdrop of amazing talent. I had never spent any time in Provincetown, but once I was able to center myself and begin to understand that it was where I was supposed to be at that moment in my life, I grew in ways I never would have imagined."

Today, with a partner and two small children, Woodson admits she writes whenever she can. And while the acknowledgements for her work are thrilling, she would be the first to say that she isn't writing for recognition. "I'm writing to change the world," she says. "I don't love it the

way it is. I'm writing something people can take in and digest and use to understand their own power and accountability. Some people are scared of this—they're scared of change and movement and truth. They're going to resist by challenging the work I'm doing. Others are going to applaud it. That's pretty much how it goes."

Ready for the ride, indeed. ▲

CECILIA GALANTE is the author of the nationally acclaimed young adult novel *The Patron Saint of Butterflies*, as well as several other young adult and middle grade books. Her most recent work, *The Invisibles*, is her first novel for adults, and will be released by HarperCollins in August of 2015. She lives in Kingston, Pennsylvania.

Faithful and Virtuous Night

By Louise Glück

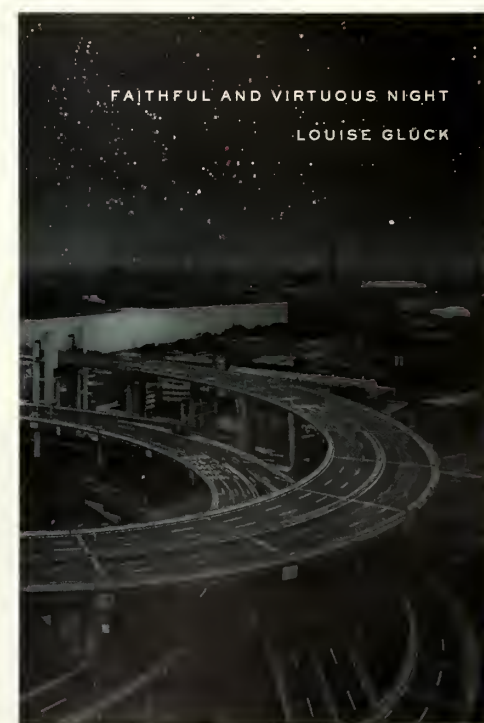
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014

A BOOK REVIEW BY DANIEL TOBIN

LOUISE GLÜCK'S EXEMPLARY career as a poet now spans more than fifty years, over which she has won virtually every award imaginable. Even in the Balkanized and fractious world of American poetry since the 1960s, when her books began to appear, she has managed to rise to the forefront of her art—one of the very few whose work will surely last by virtue of her achievement, and that exceptional achievement having received the rarer boon of a consensus. Her work arrived a long time ago, and it has remained relevant through her changes. The Minimalism of her early work, through the Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Wild Iris*, exhibited a characteristic intensity, a kind of intensive sweep in which the poems, despite their relative brevity, seemed to open inwardly, unsparingly, in a strike-force conjunction of intellect, myth, and emotional ferocity.

In the books that follow, from *Meadowlands* to *A Village Life*, it is fair to say Glück has given narrative somewhat greater play in her poetry, with a slightly looser weave of line, while nonetheless retaining her tonal urgency. The poems of *Faithful and Virtuous Night* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux), winner of the 2014 National Book Award, represent her most emphatically narrative work to date. The motif of the journey—knight errantry as well as night's errancy—shapes the book from its outset, as in "Parable," a poem that functions as the threshold into the book's elusive atmosphere where settings shift and the artist-narrator meditates reflexively on life, on family, on history, on his or her art. The poems are atmospheric—mists, silence, darkness, recurring motions that lead to no path forward, or to a path forward that redoubles on itself into the past again.

Unlike Glück's earlier work, *Faithful and Virtuous Night* reveals a poetry of surfaces, surfaces that vanish as one reaches out to touch them. The book eschews sharp edges, opting instead for a poetry of shimmering twilight haze and shifting boundaries, the luminal rather than the intense,



the meditative rather than the dramatic. As such, there is something distinctly self-conscious in the orchestration of Glück's latest work, with its dream-like contours, with its gestures to the conventions of quests and searching ventures. Those who have long admired her intensity and unsparing eye and ear will find *Faithful and Virtuous Night* a surprising departure into the shades and shadings, a pilgrimage into the indefinite. ▲

DANIEL TOBIN is the author of seven books of poems, *Where the World Is Made*, *Double Life*, *The Narrows*, *Second Things*, *Belated Heavens*, *The Net*, and *From Nothing*. His awards include fellowships in poetry from the National Endowment for the Arts and the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation.

George Cram "Jig" Cook

AN AMERICAN ORIGINAL

By Susan Rand Brown

IN THIS CENTENNIAL YEAR of the Provincetown Players, professor of theater studies and Susan Glaspell biographer Linda Ben-Zvi, at a stage when retirement to her home in Jaffa, Israel, overlooking the Mediterranean, would be a respectable option, is instead climbing mountains in Delphi, Greece, in search of material illuminating the life of George Cram "Jig" Cook, Glaspell's husband and arguably the key figure in the formation and direction of the Players themselves.

Just as she showed that Glaspell was much more than a walk-on figure in the narrative of Eugene O'Neill's arrival on the Provincetown stage, in her new book, Ben-Zvi hopes to provide a fuller context for evaluating the charismatic Cook, whose fervor and tenacity made the Players a reality, first in Provincetown in 1915 and then in Manhattan, where he moved the theater in 1916. Just as Ben-Zvi, during her extensive research for her Glaspell biography (*Susan Glaspell: Her Life and Times*, Oxford University Press, 2005, awarded the Special Jury Prize from the American Library Association), was concerned with preserving the legacy of this pioneering feminist novelist and playwright, whose radical boldness in life and art had been threatened by cultural erasure, so too her current concern is that Cook's central role in the establishment of modern American drama not be diminished or overlooked.

To this end, she is preparing a cultural study of Cook and his times, researching his writings on various social and political issues, and the parallels between many of his ideas and those of central intellectuals of the time, such as Van Wyck Brooks, Randolph Bourne, and Max Eastman, who shared with Cook a passion for Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman, as well as an avid interest in modern European literature and in many of the "isms" that mattered to Cook's generation. "Cook was not this oddity, as he has often been described, but a figure very much of his time," Ben-Zvi said, though she adds that his originality sprang from his ability to meld a Midwestern heritage—drawn from his antecedents and shaped by his bohemian mother, who taught him a love for literature and beauty—with Native American myth and history, and his lifelong love of classical Greece.



(above and below) Cook in a tavern in Delphi, 1922



IN ANDREAS' WINESHOP, DELPHI. LEFT TO RIGHT: ANDREAS, ELIAS SCARMOUCHES, "KYRIOS KOUK," ANOTHER SCARMOUCHES, OUR MAN ATHANASIOS.

He finally visited Greece in 1922 and, two years later, he tragically died there at the age of fifty.

A late-March Manhattan sun streaming onto her face, Linda Ben-Zvi, sitting on the edge of a chair in a midtown pub, describes “1915: The Cultural Moment,” the June 1987 conference at the Provincetown Inn that was to generate her own cultural moment, as Mary Heaton Vorse, Miriam Hapgood DeWitt, Joel O’Brien, and others shared firsthand memories of the Provincetown Players. Then a theater specialist early in a teaching career, familiar with library research and about to begin a book on Samuel Beckett (one of four she has authored and edited), Ben-Zvi became captivated by Provincetown and the theater it inspired.

Suddenly, she was discovering a cast of characters only one generation removed from the Players themselves, willing to open scrapbooks—theater ephemera, including photographs—to share what they remembered of Gene O’Neill, “Jig” Cook, Susan Glaspell, and the other left-wing bohemian artists who trekked from Greenwich Village to Provincetown by boat and train during two pivotal summers, 1915–16. Here, the Players—first in living rooms and then in a repurposed, two-story fishing “shack” loaned by Mary Heaton Vorse and now known as the Wharf Theatre—wrote plays, built and painted sets, and performed for one another. The primary source materials the Hapgood daughters provided for her would go to the Beinecke Library of Yale University to be catalogued; eventually they would be accessible to all scholars, though without the gift of personal transmission she had received.

Not long after that first Provincetown visit, during a National Endowment for the Humanities yearlong grant at the Library of Congress for a work on Beckett, she wandered the stacks, came across novels and plays by Susan Glaspell, and became aware of the extent of Glaspell’s writing—fifty short stories, nine novels, and fourteen plays, including her Pulitzer Prize-winning play *Alison’s House*, and her classic one-act *Trifles*. She also became aware of Glaspell’s erasure from dramatic and literary history, except as the mythologized handmaiden who brought Eugene O’Neill and the Provincetown group together, a meeting that resulted in the first production of an O’Neill play: *Bound East for Cardiff*.

Much work remains to be done in Glaspell studies and, especially, in Cook studies, Ben-Zvi maintains. The paradigm surrounding Glaspell’s reputation, as a woman overshadowed by O’Neill as well as Cook, has not completely been put to rest; some researchers still prefer to frame her within the context of being a victim, dominated by the overbearing men in her life. They forget that, in her own writing, she always portrays women as strong figures, fighting gender restraints.

“Most researchers working on Glaspell are disinterested in looking freshly at Cook, perhaps because he has been portrayed, erroneously, as someone who was jealous of her, kept her in check, and, like O’Neill, was a masculine figure from whom she had to escape. I don’t accept that. From my research,” Ben-Zvi explained, “I’ve found ample proof that Glaspell and O’Neill were close, supportive colleagues, and that she and Cook had a



Glaspell and Cook visiting neighbors’ newborn goats in Delphi, with their dog Tó puppy, fall 1923

very positive, nurturing relationship, which in some ways mirrored that of Alfred Stieglitz and Georgia O’Keeffe: his satisfaction derived from initially providing a venue in which she could display her art. Some critics see Cook as a negative force, casting a shadow on Glaspell’s life—separating her from the Players, dragging her against her will off to Greece. I think such a reading of their marriage is far too simplistic.”

Just as Ben-Zvi has been Glaspell’s biographer, Glaspell too was a biographer, telling her husband’s life story in *The Road to the Temple*, first published in 1927, then reissued in 1942 and in a 2005 edition, which Ben-Zvi edited with an extensive introduction. “Now I am hoping to brush away some of the dust from Glaspell’s biography,” Ben-Zvi told me. “It has to be remembered that it was she, his wife, an accomplished fiction writer, who provided this record of his life, and also her own—hardly an objective view.”

Looking back at her own work, Ben-Zvi now sees some of the errors in perspective she too might have made, such as seeing Glaspell and other women of her generation as victims of their time, needing to be “saved” by later feminist scholars. “In truth,” Ben-Zvi said, “it was Glaspell who offered a model for us: she went to college when few women did, she sought a career and achieved great success, she was the breadwinner of the marriage, and, like the women who were her friends in Provincetown, Neith Boyce and Mary Heaton Vorse, she went her own way, indifferent to societal attitudes toward women at that time. These were independent women.

“As the Players’ centennial approaches, I decided to come back to Cook, whom I had researched extensively for the Glaspell biography—a fascinating figure not only in Glaspell’s life but in the history of Greenwich Village between 1910 and 1922, the period that brought Modernism to America. He needs to be studied—in relation to O’Neill and the Players certainly, but also, as

importantly, for his own accomplishments and legacy to American culture.”

In the preface to her Glaspell biography, Ben-Zvi opened the door for other researchers interested in exploring the life of Jig Cook, whom she refers to as one of the great, larger-than-life characters that America has produced. “He deserves to be more than a footnote in Eugene O’Neill’s story,” Ben-Zvi wrote in 2005, “the surrogate father in decline, denied by the son in ascendancy—or even in Susan Glaspell’s life, as her greatest love and partner in her greatest adventure, the Provincetown Players. In this book, I suggest the outlines of a study someone else may choose to write.”

It has been a full decade since the Glaspell biography came out. My question to her was obvious: has anyone accepted this invitation to follow Cook where her research led, from the shores of the Mississippi River in Davenport, Iowa, where both Cook and Glaspell were born, to the mountains of Delphi, locus of his lifelong quest to become immersed in the soil where ancient theater was born?

Ben-Zvi smiled broadly: not really. A year ago, when Ben-Zvi was looking online to see if anyone was writing about Cook, one of the few articles she spotted was a blog by an archivist at the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, who wrote about Cook and his Delphi gravesite. This led to their correspondence and Ben-Zvi’s invitation to present the school’s 2015 Annual Archivist Lecture, which she gave in January. “To this classical studies audience, my Cook research was modern history,” she said with a grin. In fact, the lead archivist and other archeologists asked Ben-Zvi to show them the various sites in Delphi where Cook and Glaspell had lived.

“In Delphi I introduced them to Fanis Tsakalos,” she remembered, “the grandson of the man who worked for Jig and Susan during their two years in Delphi, and made it possible for them to experience life in the town and on Mount Parnassus, as Cook had long dreamed.”

What Ben-Zvi discovered was that Cook’s passion for the theater still existed after he left Greenwich Village and the Provincetown Players, and was only replanted in Delphi, where he began the Delphi Players. He inspired the peasants of Parnassus to play roles in the epic story of their little-known history, which he discussed with them. He also involved students from the University of Athens in the project. Cook was such a positive force in Greece that when he died the government allowed a stone from the ancient city to be used as his headstone, the only person to be so honored.

He was influential as well in inspiring another American Grecophile, Eva Palmer, who, with her husband, the Greek national poet Angelos Sikelianos, included theater in the revival of the Delphic Festivals they produced in 1927 and 1930, and who dedicated the Pythian Games there to the memory of Cook, whose love of Greek drama inspired them.

“This changes the whole notion of Cook as a broken-down alcoholic who went off to Delphi to die. His Greek years were not an end, but a continuation of what he did in Provincetown: create a community within which theater could flourish,” Ben-Zvi said.

"The way Cook is portrayed in many O'Neill biographies and in Glaspell's *Road to the Temple* as well—as a dreamer, unfulfilled, a failure, even as he often described himself—is false. If there was failure, it was not only his but that of the revolutionaries and dreamers who, in their youth, dreamed of making the world a better place. Cook dreamed more, and accomplished more, than he himself realized."

Our conversation ended with a less scholarly, more sentimental story, one that also linked the two cultures and the lovers whose history loomed large in the making of modern American drama. The last time Ben-Zvi was in Greece, she took a stone from Susan Glaspell's gravesite in Truro and placed it (in the Jewish tradition) on the grave of Cook in Delphi. She then took a stone from Delphi, and brought it to Truro. "They may be geographically far apart, but I was able at least to make this connection, as I have been able to make connections through my writing on the couple."

In restoring Susan Glaspell to a prominent position within the pantheon of early American drama, and in the process reframing the mythologies surrounding George Cram "Jig" Cook, Ben-Zvi and her passion for connection can only renew interest in Provincetown's theatrical and cultural history. Ben-Zvi will be in Provincetown this July, interested in meeting others with information about Cook and taking part in the centennial celebration of the Provincetown Players, hosted by the Provincetown Theater. The March wind over midtown the day we met was by this time creating quite a stir: just the kind of excitement Linda Ben-Zvi has in mind. 🐘

SUSAN RAND BROWN has spent summers in her family's Commercial Street home since her teens, and began writing about the arts for the Provincetown Advocate in the late 1970s, covering local celebrities from painter Robert Motherwell and photographer Renate Ponsold to performers Wayland Flowers and Duane. She has since profiled many of the Outer Cape's major artists for Provincetown Arts and the Provincetown Banner, and is also a regular contributor to Art New England, covering Connecticut as well as the Outer Cape. "Mothers and Sons in the Plays of Eugene O'Neill" was the topic of her PhD dissertation.

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Neith Boyce

AND THE GREAT PROVINCETOWN SUMMER OF 1915

By Carol DeBoer-Langworthy

NOW, ONE HUNDRED YEARS later, one wonders whether Neith Boyce had any idea, when she moved into a seaside cottage at 621 Commercial Street, that her summer of 1915 in Provincetown would have an international impact on theater, painting, and the decorative arts in the coming century. Looking back, cultural historians paint that season in a glow of pregnant light, rather like those fourteenth-century Sieneese paintings in which the Virgin sits enthroned in rays of golden glory, contemplating her coming role in human history. In my mind at least, Neith Boyce (1872–1951) is the centerpiece of a similar tableau for 1915, surrounded by cultural saints: Eugene O'Neill, Susan Glaspell, Mary Heaton Vorse, George Cram ("Jig") Cook, Mabel Dodge, and Wilbur Steele—not to mention Boyce's husband, the journalist Hutchins Hapgood. Or is it just that Neith's hair was often described as "Titian"?

Like the story told in those paintings, what actually went on in the summer of 1915 is now lost in a cloud of myth. But we do know one thing: Boyce's play *Constancy*, performed on Thursday, July 15 on the porch/veranda of what was later called Bissell Cottage, did set in motion a revolution in theater, staging, acting, and a whole new way of living. As a believer in Boyce, and as her biographer, I like to think that, despite her ironic tone in letters at this time, Boyce *did* know that something revolutionary was happening that summer. In chronicling her life, I have often been struck by how often she sensed just what new thing was coming, as well as how to introduce that novelty. She was a person who took action, but often diminished her own role in these innovations. Her autobiography states, half-humorously, that she agreed with a Chinese belief that inventors of new things should be put to death.

Here's how I think it went on the fifteenth. About ten o'clock, after the children had been put to bed, neighbors and friends toted their own chairs into the living room of the Hapgood cottage for an evening of theater featuring two short plays. Directed to arrange their chairs facing the porch, they watched Boyce's one-act play about two of their own: the affair, recently ended, between art patroness Mabel Dodge and radical journalist John Reed. *Constancy*, originally titled *The Faithful Lover*, had been rejected by the Washington Square Players in New York's Greenwich Village that spring. So had the second play on the bill that night, *Suppressed Desires*, a spoof on the Freudian analysis sweeping the Village.

For Boyce's play, audience members beheld a porch that Robert Edmond Jones—later a famous theater designer—had "set" with a long sofa and bright cushions backed by a moonlit bay. Boyce herself took the leading role of Moira, and Joe O'Brien, Mary Heaton Vorse's husband, played Rex in a Shavian talk play about fidelity in relationships.

Boyce also directed this thinly veiled retelling of the breakup of Dodge, one of her best friends, and Reed, who had been introduced to Mabel by Neith's husband. The audience later reversed its chairs to view through broad open doors—perhaps pocket doors separating a dining and living room?—the second play, which was written and acted by two other Provincetown "regulars," novelist Susan Glaspell and renaissance artist/director Jig Cook. Scholars now credit this play more to Glaspell, but Cook was the brilliant stage manager.

This evening was the culmination of events and relationships that started when Boyce and Hapgood and their four children began summering in Provincetown in 1911. Novelist Susan Glaspell and labor journalist Mary Heaton Vorse soon became Boyce's best friends (and neighbors), their friendship ending only when Vorse monitored Boyce's condition during her last days of life in Provincetown in 1951. According to Vorse's biographer, Dee Garrison, this trio of women (Glaspell, Boyce, and Vorse), along with their husbands, "formed the nucleus that would bring the town its renown as a suburb for the Villagers and as the birthplace of the Provincetown Players." The difference in 1915 was the addition of the indefatigable Mabel Dodge.

Indeed, Provincetown was full of people that summer—people who usually would have decamped for Europe, but 1915 was the second year of World War I. Earlier, in the spring of 1915, Vorse herself had been trapped abroad, in England, after covering the Women's International Peace Conference in the Hague and touring European war sites. She returned to Provincetown with what would now be termed a post-traumatic stress disorder. She felt unable to speak to her friends about the horrors she had seen. And she was on the outs with Mabel Dodge. Or perhaps Dodge had it "in" for Vorse. The two salon hostesses were dueling for top billing in Provincetown that summer. (Hutch Hapgood, who knew them both well, eventually

put a stop to it.) According to Hapgood's memoir, everybody in Provincetown was depressed about the war. According to Vorse's memoir, only the founding of the Provincetown Players relieved her ennui.

And who was Neith Boyce? A serious feminist who had established a writing career as a single woman in Greenwich Village, Boyce insisted on using her birth name after marriage, at least for publishing her short stories and novels. Since 1899, she had been married to Hutchins Hapgood (1869–1944), a labor journalist and memoirist whose *A Victorian in the Modern World* (1939) would become a classic text for people wanting to understand the cultural shifts of the early twentieth century. In 1915, Boyce was probably better known as a serious writer than her husband, who was, at this point, an out-of-work newspaperman.

In fact, she had just sold a story and was working on selling another, "Sand." Some of her stories appeared in the well-known national publication *Harper's Weekly*, edited by her brother-in-law, Norman Hapgood. Her most recent novel, *The Bond* (1908), had vivisected the new forms of marriage being attempted by Greenwich Villagers and other forward-looking thinkers. In retrospect, that book looks remarkably like a portrait of the Boyce-Hapgood marriage and sounds a grim bell for women's hopes of true equality, even within a companionate marriage. It also tolls one of Boyce's constant themes, that of the futility of the struggle to change human existence. Even so, her tragic view of the universe did not mean giving up the fight.

In 1915, just preceding the historic performance, Boyce and Hapgood, along with their second son, Charles, and daughters Miriam and Beatrix, had settled into their seaside cottage for the summer. Hutch had a vegetable garden. Boyce, their elder son, who had renamed himself "Harry," was off to the Rainy Lake area of northern Minnesota at



The Bissell Cottage, 1984 PHOTO BY ELIZABETH BROOKE

his uncle Billy Hapgood's "camp," along with a cousin, Powers Hapgood, who would later become a famous labor organizer.

As usual, there was a lot going on in the family and the couple's relationship. The Hapgood marriage had already survived several crises as Boyce and Hapgood attempted to enact a Varietist union based on anarchist principles. Scholar Ellen Kay Trimberger has analyzed their relationship as one of "sexualized warfare." Christine Stansell, a leading historian on American women, thinks that "[d]isclosure was the turn-on," as the couple disclosed their attractions to other persons. These entanglements were mostly platonic on Boyce's side.

So this was the scene for the summer of 1915, which I argue was crucial to what painter Marsden Hartley later called "the Great Summer of 1916." Without the summer of 1915 and the founding of the Provincetown Players, there would have been no venue for Eugene O'Neill's *Bound East for Cardiff*, which launched his career as a performed playwright. Scholars now say that O'Neill, Glaspell, and Boyce—in that order—are the most important playwrights to come out of the Players.

According to Susan Glaspell's memoir about her husband, *The Road to the Temple* (1926), the idea of putting on plays had been born by the "Regulars" over a campfire on the dunes. The married couples included Boyce and Hapgood, Mary Heaton Vorse and Joe O'Brien, Jig Cook and Susan Glaspell, and Wilbur and Margaret Steele. On July 1, Hapgood wrote to Mabel Dodge that "play fever was on." After the performance, Boyce wrote to her father-in-law, Charles Hapgood I:

You will be amused to hear that I made my first appearance on the stage Thursday night!—I have been stirring up the people here to write & act some short plays—We began the season with one of mine. Bobby J[ones] staged it on our veranda. The colors were orange & yellow against the sea—We give it at 10 o'clock at night & really it was lovely—the scene I mean—I have been highly complimented on my acting!!!

The play opens with a scene in which Moira/Mabel/Neith makes Rex/Reed/Joe enter the house by the door instead of climbing up a rope ladder from the floor below. This mimicked the device Mabel Dodge had installed in her Florentine villa to entice/excite her husband, Edwin Dodge, and then John Reed, as foreplay. The crowd would have recognized this trope, as everybody knew everybody else's business in Provincetown that summer. Rex has just returned from an adventure abroad that included an engagement to another woman. He broke it off, however, upon realizing that she intended to make him settle down. He reconsiders his relationship to Moira and decides to reignite it. But he is in for a surprise. Healed from her heartbreak, Moira assertively, civilly, and intelligently explains to Rex that she has moved on in the world and holds no malice against him. Rex, in contrast, thinks they can and should go back to their earlier state of commitment, even while admitting that he needs his freedom and cannot settle down. Nonetheless, he pledges that "I would always come back. . . . Yes, always. I couldn't help myself. I couldn't stay away for long. I couldn't forget you." Moira is unmoved, even while admitting that she'll always be fond of him as a friend. Moira has become truly self-sufficient in her healing, which



Hutchins Hapgood and Neith Boyce in their cowritten play, *Enemies*, in the Wharf Theatre in summer 1916. Starting with the group's first production in 1915, Boyce wrote, acted in, and directed three other plays with the Provincetown Players.

YALE COLLECTION OF AMERICAN LITERATURE, BEINECKE RARE BOOK AND MANUSCRIPT LIBRARY, YALE UNIVERSITY

drives Rex mad. He charges off at the end of the play, shouting "Constancy!"

An alternate ending appears in another version of the play in Boyce's papers at Yale's Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, however. This one has Moira asking Rex, "Who is the unfaithful one? You—who left me!" with Rex retorting, "You—who forgot me!" as the curtain falls. So the question of constancy remains constant as a human mystery. As the audience well knew, this question of fidelity was a major issue in the Boyce-Hapgood marriage as well. Scholars now read the play with Moira and Rex as stand-ins for Neith and Hutch as much as, or more than, for Mabel and Jack. Hutch's many sexual escapades were well known, but he often accused Neith of "spiritual infidelity."

The two plays were such a hit that the cast agreed to an encore. But there was a problem: no theater. The charismatic Jig Cook, who has often been called the founder of the Provincetown Players, talked Mary Heaton Vorse into the use of a fish warehouse on her recently purchased Lewis Wharf as a theater. Then he talked Margaret Steele out of using the fish house as her painting studio. The second run still required attendees to bring their own seating. Opening a wharf door onto the sea gave Neith's play another moonlit backdrop.

The theater group was up and running and became organized around anarchist principles in 1916. They still needed, however, a statement of purpose for their new take on theater. Susan Glaspell wrote that "Jig and Neith said it together.

He came home and wrote it down as an affirmation of faith." Here is their credo:

One man cannot produce drama. True drama is born only of one feeling animating all the members of a clan—a spirit shared by all and expressed by the few for the all. If there is nothing to take the place of the common religious purpose and passion of the primitive group, out of which the Dionysian dance was born, no new vital drama can arise in any people.

Constancy, while specific to Boyce and Hapgood's relationship that summer of 1915, continues the discussion of what was called the New Marriage in Boyce's fiction. As a New Woman, she pondered the cost of those new freedoms, and her works reveal some of the guilt experienced by women who felt they might have neglected their children while pursuing their own intellectual and artistic projects. She, too, was a Victorian in a number of ways—not least by choosing to stay with a philandering husband for the sake of her four children. Nonetheless, many of Boyce's long stories, which she called novellas or novelettes, call for granting women the same personal sexual freedoms as men. In "The Undertow," her 1914 story in *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine*, for instance, the young heroine falls for a handsome but shallow lifeguard, loses her "virtue," and ends the summer sadder and wiser. But the tone of the story suggests that the wisdom gained is worth

the price—implying that women deserve an equal chance to make mistakes in love, as do men. The subtlety of Boyce's arguments, many of which are founded on anarchist philosophies of personal freedom, perhaps contributed to her being overlooked by critics for generations.

Theater scholar Judith E. Barlow believes that Boyce may have written her next play, *Winter's Night*, in 1915, with the Players in mind. This work features a romantic triangle, a familiar device in O'Neill's plays, and a grim Midwestern farmscape in winter—very similar to that used in Susan Glaspell's *Trifles*, also produced by the Provincetown Players. Mary Heaton Vorse became famous for her bloodcurdling scream that heralds the suicide at the end of Boyce's second play with the group. Later came *The Two Sons*, featuring another set of brothers competing for the same woman in a romantic triangle.

In 1968 and 1969, Boyce's younger son, Charles H. Hapgood II, gave an interview to Louis Sheaffer, an early biographer of Eugene O'Neill. A transcript of that interview is now in the Sheaffer-O'Neill Collection of Connecticut College. In the interview, he gives an inside view of the genesis of the theater group:

The Provincetown Players was originally my mother's idea, she had written plays, done quite a bit of writing, and thought no use to wait for Broadway to produce their work but should do it themselves . . . She was the one who urged it. She was the builder type, kept after things, didn't let them drop . . . organizer and builder, felt very strongly about this . . . she sold the idea to Jig cook, who grabbed it. (Ellipses in original transcript)

At the end of the summer of 1916, the group decided to try its luck in New York and began performing on MacDougal Street in Greenwich Village. The rest is, as they say, history—of the little theater movement that affected major theater and lives on today as the off-Broadway movement.

In all, the Provincetown Players would put on three of Boyce's plays—*Constancy*, *Winter's Night*, and *The Two Sons*—and *Enemies*, the dialogue she cowrote and performed with her husband. Judith Barlow credits Boyce with most of the writing of that play as well, however. Boyce's plays have survived and are now being rediscovered: today, her *Winter's Night* is considered an American classic, along with Susan Glaspell's *Trifles*. A revival performance occurred in Provincetown in June of 1987 as part of an international conference, "Beginnings: 1915, the Cultural Moment," organized by Adele Heller and Lois Palken Rudnick. Revolutionary beginnings, indeed: one night on the wooden porch of a cottage by the sea, where Neith Boyce and a small band of artists introduced a new generation of thought and work that is still influencing us today. ▲

CAROL DEBOER-LANGWORTHY teaches in the Nonfiction Writing Program of the English Department at Brown University. She dedicates this article to the memory of Neith Boyce Souza, 1940–2008, known in the family as Neith Junior.

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Tennessee Williams

HIS LONG FAREWELL TO PROVINCETOWN

By Leona Rust Egan

JOHN LAHR, THE WELL-KNOWN THEATER CRITIC, begins his 2014 biography, *Tennessee Williams: Mad Pilgrimage of the Flesh* (W. W. Norton), in 1945, at the time of Tennessee Williams's breakthrough success *The Glass Menagerie*. The subtitle chosen by Lahr, "Mad Pilgrimage of the Flesh," is a significant phrase that Williams wrote much earlier, when, as a young writer, he was struggling with the conflicting impulses of his life. It so happens that the phrase appears in a 1940 letter Williams wrote reflecting on life, particularly his first summer in Provincetown. He was aboard the Boston boat, leaving Provincetown for a quick return trip to Manhattan. Williams's 1940 letter reads:

I had an awfully strange feeling as the Boston boat sailed slowly around the light-house point and then distantly—austerely—past the new beach and the glittering white sand-dunes. Saw P-town dwindling sort of dream-like behind me. Not real at all. The Pilgrim monument getting smaller till it was just a tooth-pick—"mad pilgrimage of the flesh" is what it seemed to stand for.

The Provincetown summer of 1940 was a pivotal time for the young playwright Williams as he wrestled with his artistic career, his spiritual values, and the demands of the "flesh." It was an intense conflict, with aftermaths that lingered for a lifetime. The 1940 summer was the first of Williams's four trips to Provincetown. After 1940, he returned three other times: in the summers of 1941, 1944, and 1947. But his first encounter with the liberating atmosphere of Provincetown was the most indelible. He came with high expectations. He was nearly thirty years old, had recently gained

some recognition as a professional writer, and, in Provincetown for the first time, he could overtly express his sexuality.

It was also a disappointing summer. He experienced two major setbacks. He was rejected by his newly discovered ideal lover. The staging of his premiere play was postponed for months, and then bombed in Boston. How he dealt with these personal misfortunes is relevant to his later successful career.

On a ramshackle wharf overlooking the Provincetown harbor, he had found and then quickly lost Kip, his ideal lover, a burnished-bronze ballet dancer, whose image Williams nostalgically recalled for the rest of his life. At the same time, he was anxious about his play, for he had heard nothing reassuring from the Theatre Guild, his producer. He made a hasty round-trip back to New York not only to check on the impending staging of *Battle of Angels*, his first Broadway-backed play, but also to escape the bitterness of Kip's

rejection, hoping that while he was away his new lover would reconsider their brief affair. The 1940 letter continues:

Leaving makes you conscious of that fatal, inevitable forward motion in life which at other times can seem so curiously stagnant. When you see a shore-line recede behind you, you realize very keenly and bitterly and excitedly what is happening to you all the time of your life. — The Long Goodbye.

Kip Kiernan (alias Bernard Dubowsky, 1918–1944) was an illegal alien from Canada, of Jewish-Russian heritage. He sneaked into the United States to escape the draft and to pursue a career as a professional dancer. The summer of 1940 was Kip's first and only trip to Provincetown. He was one of the models paid to pose for the summer in Hans Hofmann's art school, located near Captain Jack's Wharf. Hofmann, who also had a New York school, encouraged his students to follow him to his new Provincetown art school.

Kip never returned to Provincetown. He married and joined the Hanya Holm Dance Company and performed in several productions. In 1944, at the age of twenty-six, Kip died from a brain tumor. Williams alleged in his *Memoirs* that he visited Kip in the hospital at that time. He did dedicate his collection *One Arm and Other Stories* (1945) to Kip's memory. In this collection, the phrase "mad pilgrimage of the flesh" appears in print for the first time, in the short story "The Malediction." Many years later, in 1980, Williams wrote directly about Kip in his play *Something Cloudy, Something Clear*.

After the summer of 1940, Williams returned to New York and was faced with the indefinite delay of the production of his play *Battle of Angels*, and then the punishing blow when, in December 1940, its premiere bombed in Boston. Another failure was his many attempts to reestablish contact with Kip, who would not answer his letters; he persisted as the epitome of the physical and conceptual qualities Williams wanted in a lover. He mourned the loss of Kip the rest of his life.

In February 1948, while on a solo tour of Italy, he wrote an elegiac poem of deep remembrance:

Testa dell'Efebo

Of Flora did his lustre spring
And gushing waters did bathe him so
That strings of instruments were held
Until his turning let them go.

And gold he was when summer was,
Unchangeable this turning seemed
And celebrants with strings have tried
How golden then his temples gleamed

But finally as metals will
The lustre of his body dimmed
And that town burned wherein was turned
This slender copper cast of him.
[Sgd] TW Napoli 1948

(above) Vintage postcard of the Provincetown Playhouse on the Wharf

In a concurrent letter in February 1948, Williams mentioned that he had “got some nice little art-objects” in Naples, “including a copper statue of a boy in Pompeii, which I wrote a poem about.” He also enclosed in the letter a typescript of the poem, which Williams revised and published that year in *Harper’s Bazaar*.

The statue is a bronze male nude, belatedly discovered in the archives of the estate of Tennessee Williams at Sewanee, University of the South. This remarkable discovery was made by Christopher McDonough, chair of classical languages at the University of the South. His account of this unexpected discovery, and his research into its provenance, is published in the *Humanities* journal (September/October 2011), entitled “Property of Tennessee Williams.” The discovery of this two-foot bronze-coated statuette coincided with the university’s planning for the centennial of Williams’s birthday, which took place in New Orleans in 2011.

In a profile in the May 26, 1975, issue of *People* magazine, entitled “A Playwright Lives His Greatest Drama: The Resurrection of Tennessee Williams,” Jack Horne recounted that when he visited Williams in Key West, Williams said that “his only fully realized work is not *Menagerie* or *Streetcar*, or any other of the other celebrated plays, but a short poem he wrote years ago called ‘Testa dell’Efebo.’”

That Williams cited a poem as “his only fully realized work” is not surprising, for his poetic, intrinsic romantic self was expressed in his poetry, short stories, and journals, and in letters to

understanding friends. On the other hand, his staged productions were for a commercial theater audience.

By August 18, 1940, Williams was back in New York City. He wrote to a mutual friend, Joe Hazan, about his love for Kip: “I think almost continually about Kip. Memories—dreams—longings—little hopes and great desolations. Will he ever come back?” Joe responded to this letter and advised Williams “to seek in meditation what was rationally inaccessible.” Williams replied, “I pray for the strength to be separate, to be austere . . . and for concentrated work. . . . But what an animal I am!”

Williams decided to travel to Mexico. Before he left in September, he wrote one last plea to Kip: “I love you (with robust manly love as Whitman would call it) as much as I love anybody, and want you to write!” Kip finally did write, but it was a distant reply. Williams noted, “The heart forgets to feel even sorrow after a while.”

BATTLE OF ANGELS

During the summer of 1940, Williams attended a performance of Eugene O’Neill’s early play *Diff’rent*, at the Provincetown Playhouse on the Wharf. O’Neill called the play “a tale of the eternal, romantic idealist who is in all of us.” The characters were outcasts, a theme Williams was developing in his own *Battle of Angels*.

Williams was already familiar with Eugene O’Neill’s plays. While at Washington University, he had planned a career writing poetry and short

John Lahr on Tennessee Williams and his art: “We’ve forgotten . . . the power of eloquence and the power of poetry onstage, because most people can’t do it. So when you hear it, you’re spellbound by it.”

stories, until 1931, when he saw a road performance of O’Neill’s play *Mourning Becomes Electra*, with Alla Nazimova, that inspired him to change his career plans to focus on writing for the theater.

Battle of Angels was finally staged months later in Boston on December 30, 1940. And it was a monstrous flop. Boston at the time was noted for its prudery and snobbism, and Audrey Wood, Williams’s literary agent, called the last-minute decision to open the play in Boston a “manifestation of a deep collective death wish.” The critic from the *Boston Herald* wrote, “Mr. Tennessee Williams has certainly written an astonishing play. Some of the strangest mixtures of poetry, realism, melodrama, comedy, whimsy and eroticism that it has ever been our privilege to see upon the boards.”

To add to the antagonism of the audience, there was a fire onstage, a technical fiasco. The cue sheet called for a simulated offstage fire, but it got out of hand: “Billows of black smoke were sent into the audience, who hastily exited the theater.” Miriam Hopkins, the star, did defend the young playwright, recommending that the city council be dumped, as British tea once was, into the Boston Harbor. Nonetheless, because of the Boston subscribers’ complaints, the producers decided to close the show.

Even after its failed Boston debut, Williams continuously revised and rewrote *Battle of Angels* with the hope that the play would be staged again. In 1939, Williams had described his play as a tale about a boy who hungered for something beyond reality, and got death by torture at the hands of a mob. He confesses in an “imaginary interview” with himself, “There was something about it that was inescapably close to my heart, that never let go, and I kept re-writing the play; I guess I must have rewritten it once every two or three years since 1940.” The play embodied a theme central to his writing—“a prayer for the wild at heart kept in cages.” The play eventually reemerged some sixteen years later, transfigured as *Orpheus Descending* (1957).

Ironically, the phrase “a prayer for the wild at heart kept in cages” became the subtitle for another early play, *Stairs to the Roof*, which premiered (as a full-scale production) at the Pasadena Playhouse on February 26, 1947.

“A PRAYER FOR THE WILD AT HEART KEPT IN CAGES . . .”

After the failure of his play *Battle of Angels*, Williams traveled for several months, escaping to Mexico, Georgia, St. Louis. After a short stay in New York, he then returned to Provincetown, via Gloucester, on July 27, 1941. During that period, Audrey Wood had negotiated two monetary grants: one with the

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Captain Jack's Wharf in 1940; (below) Bronze statuette COURTESY OF SEWANEE UNIVERSITY

Theatre Guild for the rewriting of *Battle*, and the other a Rockefeller fellowship to develop a new play.

Williams went first to Gloucester, Massachusetts, and stayed in a "very elegant old hotel," where it was not permissible "to go on the beach in shirtless trunks." Gloucester was his attempt to "return to my goodness," a phrase he used after episodes of intense sexuality. Williams left shortly after this for Provincetown. Joe Hazan, a member of a New York dance troupe, was there, and had leased a large house with many rooms that he rented out to friends from New York. Williams rented such a room: "The household shifts in number from seven to twenty. We eat fish at every meal because we get it for nothing."

During this visit in Provincetown, Williams met and befriended two men. Fritz Bultman was an avant-garde painter from New Orleans who was studying under Hans Hofmann. Bultman remembered Williams as a bohemian type, at times absolutely charming, but with an undercurrent of self-absorption.

Like many struggling bohemians, Williams took up temporary quarters with more fortunate New Yorkers—though he had the reputation of an undesirable, slovenly houseguest.

Oliver Evans, a young professor also from New Orleans, a flamboyant homosexual, became a longtime friend and correspondent. He and Williams often argued the dangers of being a homosexual. In his 1941 diary, Williams recorded a comment by Evans: "We ought to be exterminated for the good of society." Williams countered, "How many of us feel this way . . . this intolerable burden of guilt. . . . But feeling guilty is foolish. . . . I am a kinder man for the deviation. More conscious of need in others, and what power I have to express the human heart must be in large part due to this circumstance."

Williams's theatrical world and his lyrical voice seemed swamped in the tumult of the Second World War. He confided in his diary: "I cannot see ahead nor can anyone. I suspect it will be especially

hard for us who are not made to be warriors. . . . What little I can give to the world in the way of poetic truth—is rapidly going down in the war-time market." He even lost faith in his own work. In 1943, he reread an earlier one-act version of *The Glass Menagerie* and had a strong negative reaction: "It is appalling. Something has definitely gone wrong—that I was able to write such shit. Hysterical and empty."

He was once again saved by Audrey Wood, who was for decades a significant anchor and promoter for Williams. She arranged important theater connections, steered him to grant-giving agencies, and, after the fiasco of *Battle of Angels*, was instrumental in his award by MGM to join a screenwriters' group in Hollywood from May to August 1943 at \$250 a week. During that time, he shunned his assignment—to write a script for a Lana Turner movie—which he dubbed "a celluloid brassiere," and worked on his own play, *The Gentleman Caller*.

BACK TO PROVINCETOWN, 1944

In February 1944, Williams received a grant of \$1,000 from the American Academy and Institute

of Arts and Letters. This allowed him to stay in New York and work on final drafts of *The Gentleman Caller* (*The Glass Menagerie*). That summer he once again relocated to Provincetown, first staying on Captain Jack's Wharf. There was little peace in Provincetown, according to Williams: "Not since the Roaring Twenties had there been such rampant hedonism."

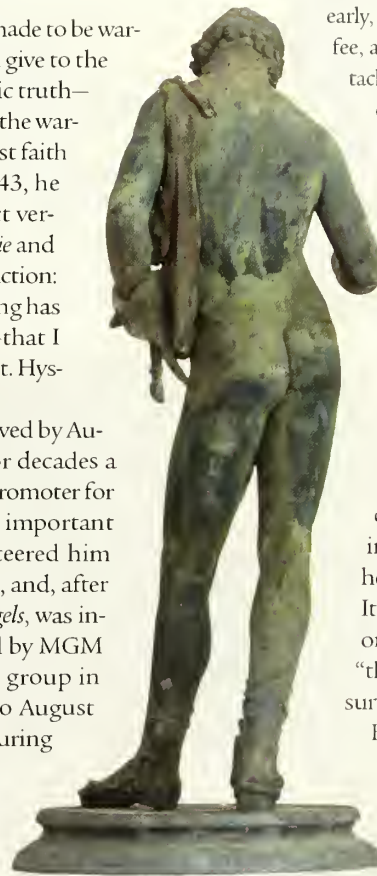
Eventually, he left the Wharf and rented a "log cabin" nearby, on the property of the painter Karl Knaths. Harold Norse, a well-known bohemian poet, relates in his 1989 *Memoirs of a Bastard Angel* that he shared that cottage with Williams in the summer of 1944:

Tennessee was working on the final draft of the *Glass Menagerie*. The small rustic cabin we shared for the six weeks belonged to the painter Karl Knaths, a gentle gray-haired man who lived with his wife in a large clapboard house in front. As Tennessee's guest I paid nothing, slept in the lower bunk, Ten in the upper bunk. He rose early, brewed endless pots of strong black coffee, and wrote all morning. On the door he tacked a sign he had printed in red and black crayon: WRITER AT WORK—DO NOT DISTURB.

Williams was a prodigious writer on several levels: poetry for himself; letters to the family and understanding friends and agents; journals, a record of his ruminations—disguised for family and more open for friends. One-act plays were closer to his poetic self than the early plays, which were cloaked in gender subterfuge. Only after his financial independence did he inject a homosexual aspect into his characters. During this period, he made seven trips to Europe, especially Italy, where he could act out his sexuality on the streets of Rome—his favorite city, "the capitol of my heart . . . the Greek ideal surviving . . . and the antique sculpture."

Before leaving Provincetown in 1944, he mailed his only copy of *The Gentleman Caller* to Audrey Wood. Only a few months later, on a cold night in Chicago, December 26, 1944, *The Glass Menagerie* opened to rave reviews, and became an instant classic in the literature of the American theatre. On March 31, 1945, it opened on Broadway. There were twenty-four curtain calls. The run lasted for 563 performances.

Just before the 1946 New Year, Williams moved back to the French Quarter of New Orleans. For



Brenda Murphy, in The Theatre of Tennessee Williams: "Despite the eclipse of his reputation during his lifetime, in the 30 years since his death, Williams has continued to occupy the place as one of the three or four great playwrights the United States has produced. . . . He holds a fascination for a new generation . . . in which theatrical experimentation is expected and it is homophobia rather than homosexuality that is seen as unacceptable."

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a few months, he reveled in his sudden good fortune—money, sex, fame, recognition. He then promised Wood, "I'm going to be a very serious, hard-working boy again." The ensuing twenty-four months would indeed be the most productive of his life. He wrote *Summer and Smoke*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, the first draft of *Camino Real*, two major short stories, and a story form of *The Night of the Iguana*.

A FINAL TRIP TO PROVINCETOWN

In 1947, Williams made his last trip to Provincetown. This time he was a celebrity, a man of "artistic vanity" who was in charge of his own destiny. He was sent by his director, Elia Kazan, to rewrite the script of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and Kazan's production crew arranged his visit and his lodging. On June 6, Williams was in a rented cottage on the eastern edge of Provincetown, over a mile away from the center of town. He brought his current lover, Pancho Rodriguez, with whom he was engaged in a disruptive relationship that interfered with his need to concentrate on rewriting.

By the end of August, Kazan decided to take a chance on auditioning Marlon Brando, a relatively unknown twenty-three-year-old actor; he gave Brando twenty dollars and sent him to Provincetown to read for the part of Stanley. Brando hitchhiked with his girlfriend and arrived three days later than expected. Williams reported that Brando arrived into a scene of "domestic cataclysm"—the kitchen floor was flooded, the toilets blocked, and the light fuse had blown. Brando fixed the lights,

unblocked the pipes. Then he got around to reading. He gave a sensitive reading, "letting Williams's words take him where they would." Williams called his agent to give his approval, then returned to Manhattan on September 14 and began rewriting and rehearsals.

On December 4, 1947, Williams wrote to his publisher about the Broadway premiere: "*Streetcar* opened last night to tumultuous applause." From that moment on, Williams was on a first-name basis with the world. December 10, 1947—four weeks after the glamorous opening of *Streetcar*—Williams sailed alone for Europe. He said, "I don't intend to get seriously involved with anyone ever again." For him, "austerity and anonymity" were things of the past. But that summer he began to confront his "spiritual dislocation," the loss of his concept of himself as a fugitive outsider, and the demands of success.

Frank Merlo accompanied Williams on most of his subsequent trips to Europe. Williams claimed he had first encountered Merlo in Provincetown in 1947 in the A-House, and had been intrigued by his muscular Grecian back. They met again a year later and remained lovers for nearly fourteen years, the longest affair of Williams's life. He described Merlo as "fleshed in a god's perfection," muscular, with thick black hair and a swarthy complexion.

Tennessee Williams never achieved his ideal life. He had hoped to model himself after Hart Crane, the poet-modernist, whose book of poetry he always carried with him on his travels. He envisioned a romantic death for himself, much like the one Hart Crane had experienced, disappearing in the Gulf Stream as his boat headed back to New York City. Williams's brother Dakin, the only surviving family member, rewrote this script. He had Williams buried on land in St. Louis, the place that Williams fought all his life to escape. Ironically, *A House Not Meant to Stand*, which was his last rewrite, was about his family.

But perhaps Tennessee Williams's own words, in the 1953 afterword to *Camino Real*, provide a fitting coda to his life, which he led with a belief, always, in the power of beauty and love:

My own creed as a playwright is fairly close to the painter in Shaw's play *The Doctor's Dilemma*: "I believe in Michelangelo, Velasquez and Rembrandt; in the might of design, the mystery of color, the redemption of all things by beauty everlasting and the message of art that has made these hands blessed. Amen." ❧

Further reading:

John Lahr, *Tennessee Williams: Mad Pilgrimage of the Flesh*. W. W. Norton, 2014.

Lyle Leverich, *Tom: The Unknown Tennessee Williams*. Crown Publishers, 1995.

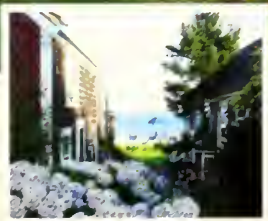
Tennessee Williams, *Notebooks*. Edited by Margaret Bradham Thornton. Yale University Press, 2006.

LEONA RUSTEGAN, PhD, a theater historian, has lived in Provincetown for thirty years. She is the author of *Provincetown as a Stage, about Eugene O'Neill in Provincetown*, published by Parnassus Imprints, 1994.

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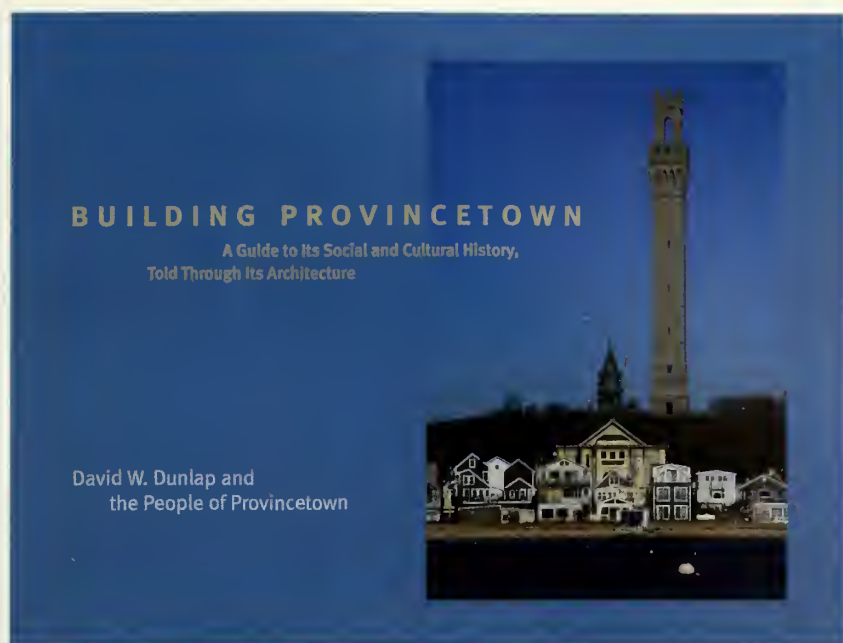


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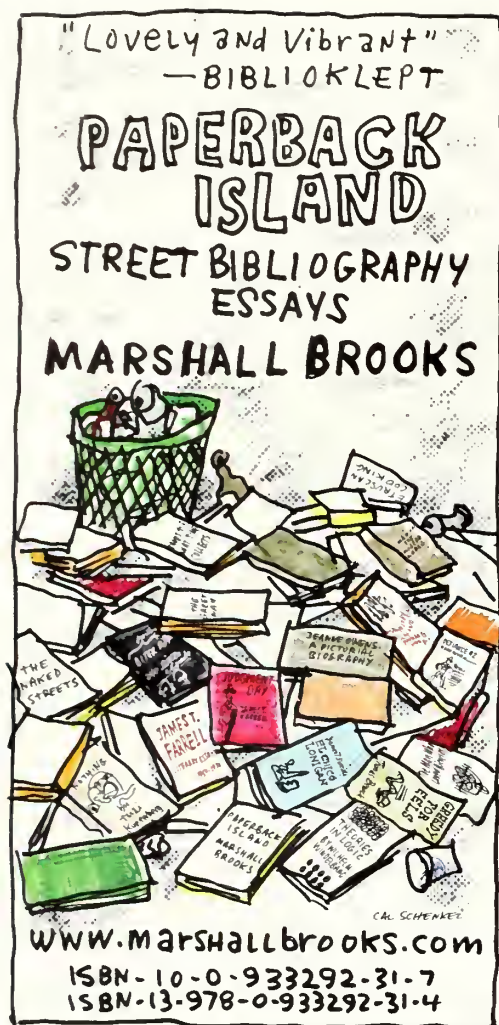
By David W. Dunlap and the People of Provincetown

buildingprovincetown.wordpress.com

HANS HOFMANN HOUSE **76 COMMERCIAL STREET**

Doric columns, serious and sturdy, hold up a prominent pediment that marks this handsome Federal-style facade from the early 1800s. For a century or so, No. 76 was owned by the Nickerson and Freeman families. The house was purchased in 1927 by the seascape painter Frederick Judd Waugh, who constructed the cathedral-like studio on Nickerson Street, behind the main house. Waugh used beams and planks from a shipwreck, as well as enormous brackets known as ship's knees. The studio was completed in 1928. The painter Hans Hofmann, who'd worked and taught at the Hawthorne Class Studio and Fritz Bultman's studio, bought the Waugh studio and home in 1945. In the house, Hofmann's wife, Miz, "created spectacular interiors using red, yellow, blue, and white paint," according to the *Walking Tour* by Josephine Del Deo and George Bryant. Hofmann conducted Friday afternoon critiques that drew large crowds. He died in 1966 and is buried in Truro.





PROVINCETOWN ART ASSOCIATION AND MUSEUM (PAAM)

460 COMMERCIAL STREET

With the addition of the Alvin Ross Wing in 2005, the facade of the Provincetown Art Association and Museum, founded in 1914, expressed the tension between traditionalism and Modernism that has long vitalized this institution. With glass walls, the new ground-floor gallery reaches out to the community—a deliberate gesture by the architects, Machado & Silvetti Associates. The addition roughly doubled PAAM's size. It shows that contextual architecture doesn't have to be imitative. Instead, the new wing, clad in cedar shingles and louvers, keeps a deferential distance from the Federal-style Ephraim Cook house, to which it is joined.

SEA BARN

631 COMMERCIAL STREET

There is no more conspicuous studio in town than Sea Barn. Its builder, Robert Motherwell, was a pillar of Abstract Expressionism, the last artist of international stature to live and work in town. His importance was underscored by a one-man show at the Provincetown Art Association and Museum in 2012, on the seventieth anniversary of his arrival (to visit his art dealer, Peggy Guggenheim, and her husband, Max Ernst). Lise Motherwell, co-curator, and Jeannie Motherwell, a well-known artist, are his daughters with his second wife, Betty Little, with whom he bought No. 622 in 1957. In 1961 and 1962, Motherwell shared the old barn at the Days Lumber Yard with his third wife, Helen Frankenthaler, an artist of high stature herself. Its arched loft door inspired the design of Sea Barn, the site of which he acquired in 1962. He considered Sea Barn complete in 1968, with Frankenthaler's studio on the second floor and his on the third.



FRITZ BULTMAN STUDIO

8 MILLER HILL ROAD

"Radiant" was how Robert Motherwell described the work of Fritz Bultman, a painter and sculptor from New Orleans in the front ranks of the Abstract Expressionists. He met Hans Hofmann in Munich in 1935. Two years later, having followed Hofmann to Chicago, he met the minimalist sculptor Tony Smith. In 1938, he set out for Provincetown to study with Hofmann,

who was teaching in Hawthorne's Class Studio on Miller Hill. There, Bultman met Jeanne Lawson. They were wed in 1943, after which they acquired this sprawling property. Smith designed a studio for Bultman that is one of the finest works of Modernist architecture in town. It was first used for Hofmann's summer school in 1945.

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HAWTHORNE BARN

25-29 MILLER HILL ROAD

If the Provincetown artists' colony can be said to have a birthplace—that is, something more structural than the dunes and tidal flats and Cape light—this is the place. It is the Class Studio, built in 1907 by the painter Charles Webster Hawthorne to accommodate the growing number of students in his Cape Cod School of Art. Though his own house at No. 9 was intended for that purpose, the school quickly outgrew it. Distinct parcels now, the two were once part of common acreage.



FINE ARTS WORK CENTER

24 PEARL STREET

As a teacher, Charles Hawthorne is given much credit for the emergent art colony. As a landlord, Frank A. Days, from the Azores, isn't given credit enough for providing the low-cost spaces that made it possible. In 1914, he and his sons built studios atop the lumber bins at the F. A. Days & Sons yard. The windows faced close to true north. Early tenants included Ross Moffett, Edwin Dickinson, Charles Kaeslau, and Hawthorne. In the 1950s, Joseph Oliver shored up the studios, installed heating and toilets, and raised the annual rents from \$60 to \$250. Oliver sold the property in 1972 to the Fine Arts Work Center, then headquartered at 135 Bradford Street.

"They believed that if they provided younger artists with a place to live, a studio to work in, and a little money in their pocket, they could attract a new generation," said Hunter O'Hanian, a former executive director.



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Arms and the Man

OR, HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE "AMERICAN SNIPER"

By Howard Karren

AT THE END OF Robert Altman's 1975 film *Nashville*, at a rally for a presidential candidate at the city's full-scale replica of the Parthenon, the country-music singer Barbara Jean (Ronee Blakely) is performing on a stage before a large crowd. Suddenly, a crazed stalker in the crowd starts shooting with a handgun, hitting Barbara Jean and fellow country star Haven Hamilton (Henry Gibson). Barbara Jean collapses, people dash this way and that, and as police and other performers take her body away, the wounded Hamilton shoves a mike at Barbara Harris, who plays a showbiz wannabe, and tells her to sing something. She starts in on a reprise of "It Don't Worry Me." "*You may say that I ain't free,*" Harris chants with a bluesy ache in her voice, "*but it don't worry me.*" A gospel choir joins in, and a bass line, and the song grows strong and proud and triumphant in its rhythmic repetition. "*It don't worry me!*" The camera cranes back to reveal the entire Parthenon, then tilts to heaven. The credits roll.

I was eighteen when I first watched that climactic scene, and it choked me up. What moved me was the invincibility of people's faith—the conviction that despite the corruption of values, the insanity and lies of American pop culture and politics, we have to carry on. "*It don't worry me!*" Soon after seeing *Nashville*, I was discussing it with an older cousin. She said that she found the movie horribly depressing. "Why?" I asked, genuinely surprised; I told her that I was thrilled by the strength of will in that final song. But to my cousin, that very song was the epitome of what upset her. "The performers, the audience—they're utterly deluded," she said. "It *should* worry them! The fact that they think everything is okay with this country is precisely the problem."



I thought about it, and I began to realize that my cousin was right. I was carried away by the emotion, by the need for faith, and I read into the movie what I yearned to feel. But once I looked beyond the movie's self-fulfilling cheer—"It don't worry me"—the irony on-screen was as evident as could be.

I don't think I've been as blind to the way I project my emotions on-screen ever since. People generally look to be entertained by movies, but if the mood is serious, and they've been upset by what they've seen on-screen, they expect some uplift from that catharsis. If not uplift, then enlightenment. Even a Brechtian play, or agitprop, however provocative it may be, is meant to pique the audience into action. The result is positive, or can be interpreted positively. But sometimes art—perhaps the finest art—is *both* negative and positive, and when it comes to uplift or enlightenment, it doesn't satisfy. And as a result, the biases we bring to the work lead us to interpret it in a reductive way that gratifies us.

I was recently taken aback by the public reaction to Clint Eastwood's film *American Sniper*. It has been championed by right-wing media, such as Fox News, and condemned by left-wing commentators. Released in theaters on Christmas Day, 2014, the movie was based on the best-selling memoir of a Navy SEAL, Chris Kyle, who fought in Iraq on four tours. Kyle was nicknamed "the Legend" for being the sniper responsible for 160 officially confirmed kills and unofficially more than 250, and his book, which was written with Jim DeFelice and Scott McEwen, is superlatively subtitled: *The Autobiography of the Most Lethal Sniper in U.S. Military History*. In 2013, a year after his book was published, Kyle was murdered at a Texas shooting range by a fellow Iraq War veteran with PTSD whom he was trying to help. Kyle was thirty-eight years old. The movie includes scenes from before and after his death that were obviously not taken from the book.

In spite of the controversy that *American Sniper* generated, it received mostly laudatory reviews from film critics. It was nominated for six Academy Awards, including Best Picture, and won Best Sound Editing. At the box office, it ultimately made \$347 million domestically,

making it the highest-grossing film to be released in 2014—and the only one among the top ten that is neither an animated nor a cartoon-like fantasy. It is also the only one rated R.

It might have been anticipated that the film would be popular with a mass audience, respected by critics and the Hollywood establishment, and alternately attacked and heralded by political media. That is partly due to Eastwood, its director, who could generate all of those reactions based purely on his public persona. But it's also due to the film's conflicted attitude toward its subject. The movie is as much of a critique of Kyle as it is a meditation on his heroism, and it both affirms and contradicts his warrior rationales, such as his belief in starkly defined types of people—those who are evil and those who are good yet defenseless and in need of his protection. That ambivalence is not immediately apparent, which has much to do with the way the movie was adapted from a memoir to a dramatic narrative. In the way some street-battle scenes are shot, *American Sniper* resembles a documentary-style war mission film, one that should be read as straightforward biography. Yet in the way its screenplay tightly focuses on Kyle's quest for moral purity—and his tragic failure to achieve it—the movie has a mythic quality. Audiences can interpret the picture either as nonfiction or as myth and blithely ignore everything in it that muddies that impression. But the impassioned political polarization—and moral certainty—of differing audiences' opinions says more about the times we live in than it says about *American Sniper*. The movie is deeply inconclusive, neither a tale of martyrdom nor a condemnation of brutality. But it is a work of art. Of that I'm sure. And as such, and irrespective of my own political leanings, I am more than happy to give *American Sniper* its due.

(clockwise from top left) Clint Eastwood as San Francisco police inspector Harry Callahan in *Dirty Harry* (1971), directed by Don Siegel. In this opening shoot-out, Callahan points the gun at a wounded bank robber, and asks him if he thinks there are any bullets left: "Being this is a .44 Magnum, the most powerful handgun in the world, and would blow your head clean off, you've gotta ask yourself one question: 'Do I feel lucky?' Well, do ya, punk?" WARNER BROS. PICTURES

Clint Eastwood speaking at the 2012 Republican National Convention, at which Mitt Romney was nominated to run for president. In his unscribed, eccentric, and widely lampooned speech, Eastwood questioned and argued with an imaginary President Obama, sitting in the chair next to him. MARK WILSON/GETTY IMAGES

(right) Director Clint Eastwood confers with his star, Bradley Cooper, who plays Navy SEAL Chris Kyle, on the set of *American Sniper*. The war scenes were shot in Morocco. KEITH BERNSTEIN/WARNER BROS. PICTURES

(opposite page) Bradley Cooper as Chris Kyle on his first sniper shoot on his first tour to Iraq—his "cherry"—in *American Sniper*. With him is another soldier played by Kyle Gallner. Although the kill was successful in military terms—Kyle prevented insurgents from throwing a grenade at Marines—the fact that the fallen enemy was a woman and a child left Kyle conflicted. WARNER BROS. PICTURES





(left) Bradley Cooper plays Navy SEAL Chris Kyle, seen here returning home from Iraq with the body of a fallen comrade, in Clint Eastwood's *American Sniper*, based on Kyle's memoir.

KEITH BERNSTEIN/WARNER BROS. PICTURES

(below) In *American Sniper*, Navy SEAL Chris Kyle is hunted by an Iraqi sniper, Mustafa (Sammy Sheik), who is his doppelgänger, a marksman of tremendous skill and control obsessive about his mission. Mustafa is not nearly as preeminent in Kyle's memoir, and his role in the film was enlarged after Kyle's sensational death.

WARNER BROS. PICTURES

(right) Chris Kyle, who fought in Iraq on four tours and became legendary for the number of Iraqis he killed, poses with his best-selling memoir, *American Sniper*, which became the basis for Clint Eastwood's film. About a year after the book was published, Kyle was murdered by a fellow Iraq War veteran with PTSD at a Texas shooting range.

PAUL MOSELEY/FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM

Let me make this clear: I did not support the Iraq War. I thought it was fueled by neocon delusion and resulted in humanitarian catastrophe; it was a strategic disaster that wasted trillions and slaughtered millions, empowered our enemies and only served to prove the moral bankruptcy of our foreign policy. And that's not all that might put me in the camp of *American Sniper* haters: even outside the arena of war, I'm not a big fan of gun culture or killing, whether it's people or animals, for food or sport or protection or justice. I am about as far from Chris Kyle as one could be.

The first Clint Eastwood movie I saw was, oddly, *Paint Your Wagon*, a musical Western in which he sings and falls for Jean Seberg. I never saw *Rawhide* on TV, and I missed seeing the extraordinary Sergio Leone spaghetti Westerns that turned Eastwood into a movie star while I was growing up. My parents regarded him dismissively as a tough guy, a bland neo-John Wayne. In the '70s and '80s, as a film student, I started to embrace the very tough guys that my family looked down upon. Eastwood's Dirty Harry character, a Western vigilante transplanted onto the contemporary urban frontier, intrigued me, and I grew to admire Eastwood as an artist, first as a movie star who cleverly manipulated his recognizable persona to further storytelling ends, and later as a director, who had clearly learned from Leone and Don Siegel and yet managed to find his own voice. Eastwood's films as a director have often been hit or miss—when the scripts he uses click with his restrained, subtly expressive style, he scores; when they don't, his reluctance to shape material can lead to uninspired, even tone-deaf results. Eastwood is notorious for workmanlike shoots with a minimal number of takes for each shot. He either catches magic in those early takes or doesn't, but he refuses to squeeze out moments of brilliance through torturous repetition. There's nothing forced about his films, but they can also feel half-baked.

Politically, Eastwood is an iconoclast, and there's enough in his résumé to give both right-wingers and left-wingers pause. Once a registered Republican, he has supported Republican presidents (Eisenhower and Nixon) and California Democrats (Senator Dianne Feinstein and Governor Gray Davis). On foreign policy he's somewhat isolationist: he was against the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and, notably, the Iraq War. He supported the Equal Rights Amendment and same-sex marriage. He believes in the necessity of gun control; in a TV interview he once said, "Why would anyone need or want an assault weapon?" Carmel-by-the-Sea, California, where he lives, elected him mayor for a term, and he has said that he is now

a registered Libertarian. He supported John McCain's failed presidential bid in 2008 and, famously, spoke in support of Mitt Romney at the 2012 Republican National Convention, in a memorably cryptic, improvised talk with an imaginary President Obama sitting in an empty chair beside him.

When asked by an interviewer what he thought of *American Sniper* being called pro-war, Eastwood said that was "a stupid analysis."

It should be noted that by the time Eastwood signed on to direct *American Sniper*, Chris Kyle had already been murdered by a fellow Iraq War veteran. The project had begun earlier, when Warner Bros. bought the rights to Kyle's book for Bradley Cooper, who agreed to star. Jason Hall, a former actor with few film-writing credits, began adapting Kyle's book into a screenplay. Then, when Kyle's death made the news, Steven Spielberg became attached to the project to direct; under Spielberg's stewardship, and with the participation of Kyle's wife, Taya, Hall significantly reworked the screenplay. Spielberg eventually dropped out—reportedly due to budget constraints imposed by Warner Bros.—and Eastwood, who has long-standing ties to the studio, stepped in.

If Eastwood was hoping to direct a movie that celebrated the heroism of a legendary marksman in the Iraq War, especially one whose claim to fame is killing hundreds of Iraqis (in his memoir, Kyle writes: "I hated the damn savages"), why would he have chosen to take on the project after that hero had been murdered, perversely, by one of his own back home? The killing of Kyle does not reinforce the notion of his martyrdom as a defender of US freedom, because the "savage" Iraqis had nothing to do with it. In fact, in Eastwood's movie (and unlike in Kyle's book), Kyle continually confronts loved ones who have learned to hate the war—his brother, his wife, even his SEAL comrades—and he refuses to concede anything. The way the script sets



up his death, it's almost a moral *correction*: Kyle's inability to see the truth of what he has done has finally caught up with him. Of course, Eastwood doesn't film it that way, so logic like that is easy to miss.

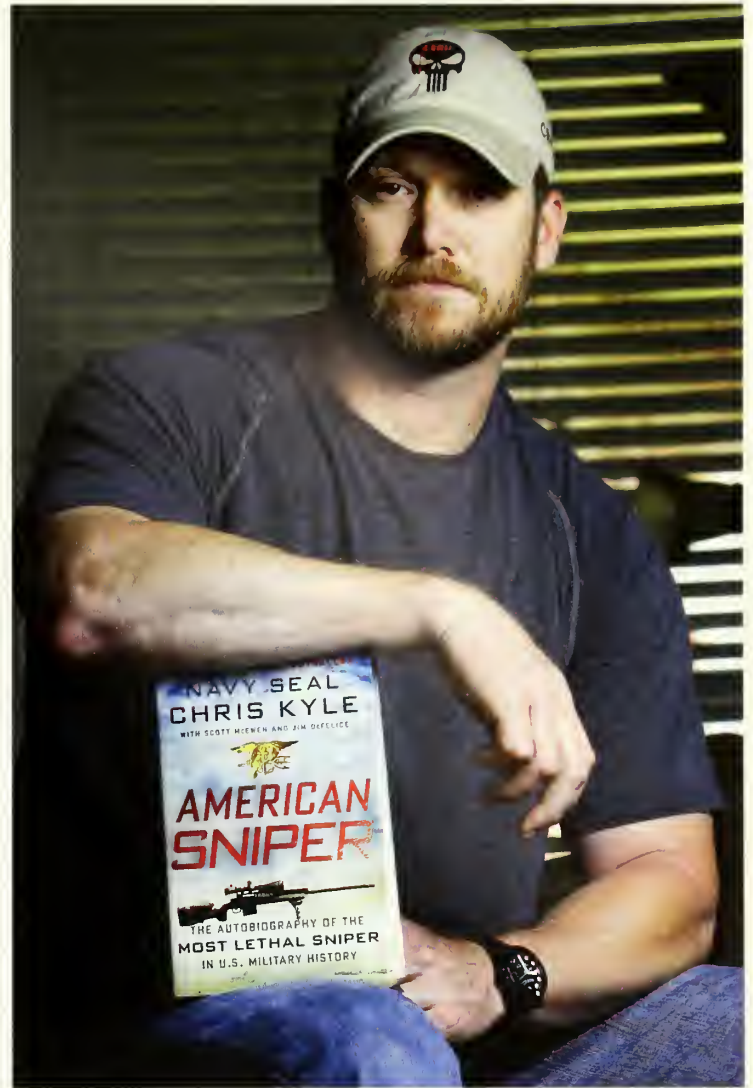
American Sniper begins with Chris Kyle on his first tour of Iraq, on his first mission as a sniper, and readying for his first kill—his “cherry.” This sequence was used in the trailer for the film and in its TV ads: in Kyle's rifle sights are an Iraqi woman and a young boy, presumably her son, under suspicious circumstances, approaching US Marines. Will he shoot? (Spoiler alert: from here on in, suspense-spoiling details will be revealed without warning.) The woman gives the boy a large grenade. Kyle shoots, killing the boy. The woman then picks up the grenade and runs toward the Marines. Kyle shoots again, killing the woman, who has thrown the grenade. It explodes short of the Marines. Despite the congratulations of his fellow SEALs, Kyle is conflicted; his first kill was not supposed to be a woman and a boy.

The film jumps back to Kyle's Texan childhood. His father teaches him how to hunt and shoot. At dinner, his father lays out a schema for good and evil. There are three types of people in this world, he tells young Chris: wolves, sheep, and sheepdogs. The wolves are evil, the sheep are good but defenseless, and the sheepdogs protect the sheep from the evil wolves. Chris, his father instructs, must be a sheepdog. Shortly afterward, Chris gets in a fight to protect his younger brother. His father praises him. And there it is: As ethical foundations go, it's stunningly simplistic. But it remains the guiding principle of Kyle's life—he's a sheepdog, protecting the sheep.

Cut to Kyle grown up. He's working with his brother to be a rodeo star. On TV, he sees the Al Qaeda bombing of the US embassy in Nairobi, Kenya. He's twenty-five, and he joins the Navy SEALs, his sheepdog destiny finally manifest. After boot camp, he meets his future wife, Taya, and falls in love. He's ready to settle down, when, again on TV, he sees a plane crashing into the World Trade Center and the towers collapsing. Off to Iraq he goes, and the film returns to his “cherry” kill. The moral test comes full circle. Kyle becomes “the Legend” as a marksman, and his sheepdog desire to protect the troops from the enemy feeds itself. But the satisfaction of a job well done eludes him.

Critics of the film have claimed that it makes a connection between 9/11 and the invasion of Iraq, though Iraq had nothing to do with 9/11. It must be said that the film makes no such connection. Kyle himself conflates all threats to US security without regard to political reality: he tells his wife that he is fighting bad guys in Iraq so that he won't have to fight them back home. But the film doesn't substantiate this, and Taya refuses to accept it as an excuse for his obsessive, never-ending tours. It's true that Kyle does fight Al Qaeda-linked insurgents in Iraq, and it's never established in the film that these Sunni insurgents are there as a *result* of the US invasion—and not vice versa. But the weapons of mass destruction falsehoods that led up to the Iraq War are not a relevant context for *American Sniper*; what matters is what Kyle believed and how it destroyed his life. In the final analysis, the film undercuts Kyle's interpretation of what he was doing in Iraq. That is the true political context for his story, and it's hardly a justification for the Iraq War, 9/11 connection or no.

In mission after mission, as a sniper and later when he joins forces on the ground, Kyle is singularly unsuccessful in destroying the bad guys he is out to find. The complexity of the relationships between the Iraqis themselves—ordinary citizens, the terrorists who threaten them, and the terrorist sympathizers who see Americans as an invading force—is something he gleans only superficially, as a means to a kill. In two major shoot-outs depicted in the film, he and his troops cause the death of noncombatants, some of them blatantly innocent, such as a father and his five-year-old son who agree to help them. Kyle bemoans that he hasn't obliterated his Al Qaeda target, but the death of innocents is seen by him only as proof of the insurgents' savagery. He remains undeterred in his missionary zeal, even though doubts are seeping into his consciousness through the mouths of others. When he crosses paths with his brother at a military airport in Iraq, the younger man, who has become a soldier and is about to go on leave, tells Kyle how proud




he is of the “Legend” his Navy SEAL older brother has become. Then he turns sullen. “Fuck this place,” he says, seething. “Fuck this place.”

During the time spent with his family stateside, Kyle is unable to decompress. His blood pressure is high, and he can't leave the war mentally—he yearns to go back and help his fellow troops. His wife tells him that she and their kids need him; in effect, she's telling him that *they* are the sheep he needs to be tending. In accomplishing *that* mission, she reminds him more than once, he's negligent.

When one of his fellow SEALs is killed and Kyle attends the funeral back home with his wife, a letter by the dead SEAL is read aloud in which he expresses his doubts about the war effort. Kyle later tells Taya that those doubts are what killed his comrade. This is a curiously mystical assertion: Kyle was on the same mission as his friend when he died, and the bullet that killed him came out of nowhere; it could have hit Kyle or anyone else. But for Kyle, at least, the war is shifting to a more delusional plane.

One character who was developed, apparently at Spielberg's request, to loom large in the film—though he's barely a side note in Kyle's book—is the Iraqi sharpshooter, Mustafa, a kind of doppelgänger to Kyle. Because of Kyle's legendary success at killing insurgents, a price has been put on his head, and Mustafa, a loner with a mercenary streak, is seeking the bounty for himself. A rivalry develops between them. Kyle is determined to off Mustafa, and vice versa. It's a narrative structure common to revenge Westerns and cop-hunting-killer movies. When Kyle finally kills Mustafa, he's ready to come home and quit the war. It has become his *raison d'être* as a soldier. He kills Mustafa in the film's final shoot-out, during which *American Sniper* takes a quasi-magical-realist leap.

Mustafa, like Kyle, never misses a target. In the final shoot-out, when Kyle shoots Mustafa, he does so from an impossible distance—about a half mile away. The target is barely visible in his sights, if at all; the kill is essentially a guess. Is this, at long last, where his sheepdog quest has taken



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him? Once Kyle pulls the trigger—which he does despite explicit warnings not to—his unit’s location is compromised and they are ambushed by a seemingly endless supply of faceless insurgents. What saves them? A massive sandstorm, which arrives with biblical panache. Kyle and his friends are being shot at and are shooting back, and the sandstorm obliterates all clarity. That they make it out alive is indeed a miracle. Most of this scene is invented by the movie, morphing together unconnected events in Kyle’s book.

Though Eastwood shoots the setup of this ambush like reportage, and the CGI sandstorm is persuasive, the scene plays out like a Hong Kong action-movie set piece or a grand samurai sword fight with Toshiro Mifune. The SEALs in Iraq at this point are, indeed, like aimless ronin with no honorable duty left to carry out. I’m not using these comparisons derisively—there’s a dramatic purpose in ramping up the unreality. And, most important, it conveys the quixotic unreality of Kyle’s point of view.

As much as the movie treats Kyle as a genuine hero, it also treats the war as a corrupting influence, a moral struggle that presents him with a series of tests. Kyle keeps trying to apply his simplistic ethical schema to this world of war and keeps coming up short—even as he succeeds, outlandishly, as a marksman. What he experiences in each successive tour is akin to a descent into madness.

Which leads us to the movie’s strange, eerie, and challenging denouement. Kyle returns home alienated and with symptoms of PTSD. He won’t

admit to being damaged, but, in helping other vets, he finds a way to heal himself. In the penultimate scene in the film, it is months since he’s returned, and Kyle has apparently adjusted to civilian life. He’s home, holding a gun, pointing it about, and teasing his wife about wanting to have sex. The kids are playing nearby. He puts the gun away on a shelf. The doorbell rings. A wan young man is waiting for him to go to the shooting range. Kyle leaves. The young man is, of course, his killer. Kyle’s funeral ends the movie. It’s tearful and heroic, but coming after the previous scene of erotically charged domestic “bliss,” it’s more than a little problematic. Why show him playing with a gun—on the day he’s murdered by a gun in the hands of a lunatic at a shooting range?



“To focus on *American Sniper*’s depiction of Kyle is to miss the larger problems of the film,” writes Sophia A. McClennen, a professor of international affairs and comparative literature at Pennsylvania State University, in the online magazine *Salon*. “In addition to sugarcoating Kyle, the film suffers from major myopia—from a complete inability to see the larger picture. And that is why criticism of the film has to look at its director, Clint Eastwood, and the troubling ways he represents a dark, disturbing feature of the GOP mind-set.”

Ah, myopia! It’s always something that the other guy has. McClennen seems to think that by portraying Kyle as someone with moral dilemmas, the film “sugarcoats” him. The opposite is true: by giving Kyle the conscience that his book lacked, the film is able to expose his morality as flawed and, eventually, delusional. Antiheroes are an Eastwood specialty, despite his GOP-tainted mind-set.

“The fact that the film has no nuance, no context and no subtlety should not surprise us,” continues McClellan. “If anything it is a terrifying glimpse into a GOP mind-set that couples delusion with violence.” McClennen is right about the movie’s “terrifying glimpse,” but she somehow isn’t able to see that the film itself is *assessing* Kyle’s violence—and so is its director. A work of art such as *American Sniper* need not declare the fraudulence of the Iraq War if its main character must discover that truth (or fail to do so) as part of his journey. That vast heroic landscape is the “larger picture” that a comp lit professor, like many of the loudest accusers of *American Sniper*, ought to have recognized. But when it comes to politics, people put their blinders on.

And that brings me back to *Nashville*. When Robert Altman was asked why the shooter in the movie targets a country singer instead of a politician, his response was to question the question. It’s not a matter of who was being shot, Altman said—it’s why there was a shooting at all. ▀


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Psychological Androgyny and the Search for Sexual Identity

By Michael Sperber, MD

“Creative individuals are more likely to have not only the strengths of their own gender but those of the other one, too. . . . If there is one word that makes creative people different from others, it is the word complexity. Instead of being an individual, they are a multitude.”

—Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, author of *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*

PSYCHOLOGICAL ANDROGYN (Greek *andros* = man + *gynos* = woman) is the term used for people who have equal masculine and feminine gender traits. It is considered by some to be an unusually desirable trait that enhances relationships between the sexes and engenders high self-esteem, decreased anxiety, psychological well-being, and enhanced creativity; it is also beneficial to children, who are beginning to form a sense of their own identities. The concept of psychological androgyny contradicts the traditional view that good mental health consists of adopting a sex-role identity that is congruent with the behavior and attitudes culturally assigned to one's own sex. Although psychological androgyny appears to be a forward-looking concept, an accurate diagnosis is crucial: in some cases, it may mask bisexuality—which should be addressed in order for a person to avoid a closeted, inauthentic lifestyle—or gender identity disorder, which sex-reassignment surgery may resolve.

A few definitions are in order. The term “psychological androgyny” refers to gender, not sex, and should not be confused with homosexuality or hermaphroditism. “Gender” refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviors, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women. “Sex” refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that define men and women. Gender is achieved whereas sex is ascribed. “Masculine” and “feminine” are gender categories; “male” and “female” are sex categories. Aspects of gender vary considerably between different human societies, whereas sex will not vary substantially. Gender identity disorder (GID) or “gender dysphoria” is a diagnosis used to describe people who experience significant discontent with the sex and gender assigned at birth.

This essay discusses the promises as well as the perils of psychological androgyny—the latter in connection with a twenty-two-year-old androgynous male, Andrej Pejic, who was miserable as a world-class model until he had sex-reassignment surgery—as Andreja, she felt totally fulfilled.¹

PSYCHOLOGICAL ANDROGYN

Gender traits characterized as feminine include being gentle, yielding, soft-spoken, compassionate and understanding, passive and expressive. Those traits considered masculine include being a leader, taking risks, being ambitious, inexpressive, and assertive. The psychologically androgynous incorporate a mix of masculine and feminine

characteristics that constitute a third gender, neither male nor female.

Psychologist Sandra Bem's research indicates that a sizable percentage of the population displays personality traits not linked to their gender identity.² In a study of fifty male and fifty female Stanford undergraduates, approximately one-third were found to be psychologically androgynous and approximately 15 percent were shown to display personality characteristics that were the opposite of those typically expressed by those of the same gender. This type of research is playing a pivotal role in broadening our views of what is truly meant by being male or female, masculine or feminine, and, by so doing, allows all of us the opportunity to expand our circle of concerns, range of activities, interests, choices, and life goals with respect to gender identity.

The psychologically androgynous do not conform to the premise that society should determine how masculine and feminine characteristics ought to be balanced. Typically, these individuals are highly flexible, don't feel limited in their nonverbal communication with others, and are fully aware of and can adapt to the needs of others to be either affiliative or controlling, adjusting their behavior accordingly. They are not defined by stereotypical norms for male or female behaviors.

GENDER DYSPHORIA AND SEX-REASSIGNMENT SURGERY (SRS)

Although psychological androgyny may be unrelated to underlying sexuality, some androgynous men may feel trapped in a masculine body—and vice versa for women—and adopt a psychologically androgynous lifestyle, and feel miserable. The problem may be resolved through sex-reassignment surgery, as the following report reveals.

In an interview, Andreja Pejic, an unmarried six-foot-one-inch Serbian-born female model, stated that her feelings about sexual identity began at an early age: "I always dreamt of being a girl. . . . One of my earliest memories is spinning around in my mom's skirt trying to look like a ballerina."³ Following sex-reassignment surgery in 2014, Pejic described her earlier gender dysphoria, feeling trapped in a man's body:

Gender dysphoria is never an easy thing to live with, mainly because people don't understand it. For most of my childhood, I knew that I preferred all things feminine, but I didn't know why. I didn't know that there was an explanation. I didn't know about the possibilities. And then I went on sort of a boyhood campaign from age 9 to about 13. I tried to be a "normal" boy because I felt like my options were either to be a gay boy or a straight boy. I didn't feel that I was gay, so I didn't know that there were any other options until the age of 13 when I went online and discovered that there's a whole community of trans people out there. There are doctors, there's medical care, there's research, and that was an eye-opener for me. From that day on, I knew what I had to do.⁴

Pejic's life changed at age thirteen, when he typed "sex change" into the Google search engine.

"My life changed," she explains. "The Internet gave me the sense that there were words to describe my feelings and medical terms."⁵

Since Pejic decided on SRS, the gender dysphoria has vanished. She also feels she has a message to communicate to the world about sex reassignment surgery:

I would like them [the general public] to understand that we are people. We're human beings, and this is a human life. This is reality for us, and all we ask for is acceptance and validation for what we say that we are. It's a basic human right.⁶

When asked about the particularities of her sex surgery in an interview with *People* magazine, Pejic would only say, "What's in between anyone's legs is not who they are." She would rather discuss advocating sex reassignment, helping to ready others for surgery, and being an activist within the transsexual community.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ANDROGYNY AND CREATIVITY

Despite a wealth of research on creativity—including its four stages, the role of memory, and the relationship between creativity and mental illness—little has been written about the role of gender in creativity. In *Creativity: The Psychology of Discovery and Invention*, psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi explores the relationship between the creative mindset and psychological androgyny.⁷ In most cultures, women are raised to be "feminine," disregarding and repressing those aspects of their temperament that the culture regards as "masculine," and men are expected to do the opposite. Creative individuals escape this rigid gender-role stereotypy. It may appear that creative girls are more dominant and tougher than other girls, and creative boys are more sensitive and less aggressive than their male peers.

Csikszentmihalyi points out that this psychological tendency toward androgyny shouldn't be confused with being gay—it deals not with sexuality but with a set of psycho-emotional capacities. Psychological androgyny refers to a person's ability to be, at the same time, aggressive and nurturing, rigid and sensitive, dominant and submissive, regardless of one's gender. A psychologically androgynous person, in effect, doubles his or her repertoire of responses and can interact with the world in terms of a much richer and more varied spectrum of opportunities. Creative persons have the strengths of both genders.

Citing his team's extensive interviews with ninety-one individuals who scored high on creativity in various fields—including astronomer Vera Rubin, sociobiologist E. O. Wilson, writer Madeleine L'Engle, social scientist John Gardner, philosopher of education Mortimer Adler, poet Denise Levertov, and paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould—Csikszentmihalyi writes:

The women artists and scientists tended to be much more assertive, self-confident, and openly aggressive than women are generally brought up to be in our society. Perhaps the most noticeable evidence for the "femininity" of the men in the

sample was their great preoccupation with their family and their sensitivity to subtle aspects of the environment that other men are inclined to dismiss as unimportant. But despite having these traits that are not usual to their gender, they retained the usual gender-specific traits as well.⁸

In conclusion, psychological androgyny appears to be a forward-looking, creative movement in society. However, in some instances, it may mask a gender identity disorder that should be resolved so that a person may avoid cognitive dissonance and depression resulting from a closeted life of pretense. For example, Andreja Pejic states:

My goal is to give a human face to this struggle, and I feel like I have a responsibility. . . . It makes me feel freer than ever. Now I can stand naked in front of a mirror and really enjoy my reflection. And those personal moments are important.⁹

Again, from a psychiatric perspective it is important to distinguish psychological androgyny from bisexuality and gender identity disorder, which may mask and forestall or prevent self-actualization. It seems that Pejic had a female psyche locked inside a man's body; for years she made a successful career out of the apparent androgyny, literally supermodeling psychological androgyny. Now that she has become her true self by moving to a woman's body, she will exclusively model women's wear. Perhaps as important as the direction of her sexual energy, and being comfortable with her appearance, is her newfound confidence in herself and her future:

I'm single. I'm open to love, so I'm taking some time off for myself now. I think that's necessary. We'll see [about a significant other]. But you know, I feel more comfortable than ever, more confident than ever, and I'm ready to face the world.¹⁰ ❖

MICHAEL SPERBER, MD, is a psychiatrist who raised his son and daughter in the Apple Tree Cottage in Provincetown and in a dune shack on the Peaked Hills of North Truro, where he wrote Henry David Thoreau: Cycles and Psyche. He is also the author of *Psychiatry and Genetics: Psychosocial, Ethical and Legal Considerations* and *Dostoevsky's Stalker: Essays on Psychopathology and the Arts* and is currently writing *Journey of the Traumatized Hero*. Chris Busa taught him the tennis he passed on to Mark Strand (see page 165) and the importance of being aware—on and off the tennis courts.

Notes:

1. "Model Andreja Pejic Discusses Her Sex Reassignment Surgery," www.style.com
2. Bem, S. L. "Masculine or Feminine . . . or Both? The measurement of Psychological Androgyny," *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 42, 155–162, 1974.
3. "Supermodel Andrej Pejic Is Still Supermodel as Andreja," www.inquisitr.com
4. "Model Andreja Pejic . . .," www.style.com
5. "Supermodel Andrej Pejic . . .," www.inquisitr.com
6. "Model Andreja Pejic . . .," www.style.com
7. Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly. *Creativity: The Psychology of Discovery and Invention* (HarperCollins, 1996, as *Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention*; reprint by Harper Perennial, 1997, 2013)
8. Ibid.
9. "Model Andreja Pejic . . .," www.style.com
10. Ibid.

Jack Kahn and the Camelot on South Pamet Road

By Walter Bingham

HIS NAME WAS Ely Jacques Kahn, Jr., but everyone called him Jack. If you lived in Truro in the '60s through the early '90s and overheard people mentioning Jack, chances were this was the Jack they were talking about. Jack was a writer for the *New Yorker*. He was among the best and he certainly was the most durable, hands down. He had bylines in seven decades—the magazine's Lou Gehrig. Jack would be quick to point out that I should have said "Cal Ripken," to show he kept up with the times. There were many parts to Jack Kahn: husband, father, writer, bon vivant, and sportsman. It was in this last category that I knew him best.

I met Jack during the summer of 1955. He would spend four months or so on the Cape, working in the bunker—a large wooden outbuilding outside his home on South Pamet Road. I, newly discharged from the air force, was ostensibly looking for a job, but also was, perhaps intentionally, unsuccessful,

and therefore able to spend most of the summer playing tennis, swimming, and, at day's end, drinking gin and tonics with friends.

In September of that year, I finally got a chance to work at *Sports Illustrated* (starting as a copy boy—the first step toward being a reporter and writer), and I was asked to have three people vouch for my character—I asked Jack if he would be one of them. The Time Inc. personnel department asked him to send his endorsement by telegram. Collect, of course. The opportunity to take advantage of this offer was too much for Jack to resist, given the competitive relationship between the *New Yorker* and *Time*. Jack had kind words to say about me—some two thousand, as a matter of fact—ultimately costing Time Inc. a bundle.

I can't remember exactly when Jack and I first hit a tennis ball together, but it was probably in the late '50s. We had a tough time getting four people for a doubles game. But one day Jack decided to have a clay court built below his house, and just like the movie *Field of Dreams* predicted, "If you build it, they will come." Or, like *Casablanca*, "Everyone comes to Jack's." And they did come: Palmer Williams, the managing editor of *60 Minutes*; Dick Miller, an English teacher at Brooklyn College and a noted jazz

pianist; sculptor Sidney Simon and his wife, Renee; the conceptual artist Doug Huebler; Bill Gibson, a writer best known for his award-winning play *The Miracle Worker*; close family friend Joan Fox; and many others.

Jack set down a few simple rules. No one was allowed to play until 2 p.m., since Jack worked until noon, then had lunch, with time for a Bloody Mary or two beforehand. And once the crowd had gathered, he decided who would play with whom. I was classified as one of the better players, and thus was often paired with someone who could barely hit the ball. I soon learned it was more fun sitting under the grape arbor, chitchatting about the summer's doings, than being asked to go down to the arena and perform.

One early summer's day in the '60s, someone phoned Jack, explained that he was a good friend of someone Jack knew, said that he would be in Truro for the month, and asked if he and his wife could use his tennis court. Jack said a reluctant okay, but told the man to come around noon, explaining that there would be quite a crowd there later on. Jack forgot all about the man until, one day toward the end of summer, he received a case of red wine with a note thanking him for the use of the court. It turned out that the fellow had arrived in Truro, asked how to get to the Kahn court, and was directed to Harry Kahn's court on Old County Road. Harry, whose house and court were far apart, had never even realized he was playing host.

Toward the end of every summer, the Falk tennis tournament was held. I'm not sure when it began, nor when it ended, and my participation was slight because I was usually busy in August at *Sports Illustrated*, where I was now an editor. Lee Falk and a



"Jack" Kahn and Walter "Bing" Bingham, after winning the Truro summer invitational doubles tournament
PHOTO BY RICHARD HARRINGTON



E. J. Kahn, Jr., at South Pamet Road, Truro, heading out for summer cocktails PHOTO BY JOHN SWOPE

few helpers would make the pairings for the three events—men's and women's doubles, and mixed doubles. Twice, Jack and I were paired—I, an A player, Jack, a B player. Jack may have been a B, but from my view, he was the perfect partner. He had no illusions of grandeur. He had a steady forehand, so he stayed on the baseline and let me rove around the net, waiting for an opponent's shot that hung too long in the air. We won each time we played.

There were usually a dozen teams, split evenly between Jack's and Lee's courts. You would play eight games against the five other teams assigned to your court, and the teams with the best records played a three-set match at Lee's. One year, Jack and I were tied with our good friends Palmer Williams and Dick Miller in games won. We were scheduled to play them about an hour or so later. I was on my way to my car when I heard Jack invite our opponents inside for a libation. After a quick sandwich at home, I arrived back and the four of us went down to the court to warm up. It didn't take a minute to realize that something was wrong and a few seconds more to determine that the three of them were, to be polite, tipsy. We won the first five games and that was it. That was Jack at his best, taking out both of them for the team.

Jack, as you may know, played legendary games of backgammon with Palmer, both after tennis in Truro and in the winter, at the Harvard Club. But Palmer left for New York sometime in mid-October, while Jack remained on the Cape until after Thanksgiving. So it was then that I stepped in. Our game, however, was not backgammon, but cribbage.

I had a table that was, in fact, a cribbage score-board, with pegs the size of clothespins. When Palmer departed, I would lug the table to Jack's, and every late afternoon we would go to it, at one dollar a game and a dime for each hole one was ahead. We would play two games, with Hopi, his friendly but awesomely large Alaskan husky, lying beside Jack's chair. After two games he would go to his kitchen, produce a bottle of fine Scotch, mix us drinks, and return for the third game.

In those days I often played duplicate bridge in Orleans, and one day my regular partner couldn't make it. Jack, I knew, played bridge, but as they say, strictly by the seat of his pants. I told him fine, but to remember one thing: should he bid one no-trump, showing 16–18 points, and I responded three no, that was not a jump bid and he should bid no more.

The afternoon went splendidly. Jack was a good card player. But late in the session, he opened one no trump and, sure enough, I had 11 points. I bid three no trump and Jack huddled. He studied his cards for a half minute, and I could only sit there. Then, quite abruptly, he passed and, smiling impishly, said, "See, I remembered."

For those who do not know, Jack was killed in an automobile accident in 1994. He was seventy-seven. Not long after this, Palmer died, and then Sidney, Doug, and others. If Truro ever had a Camelot, it was located on South Pamet Road. Now it is gone. 🐉

WALTER BIRIGHAM wrote and edited for Sports Illustrated for forty-five years. He retired to Truro and has written a sports column for the Cape Cod Times since 2002.

Running in Time to the Sea

EXCERPTS FROM A MEMOIR IN PROGRESS

By Arya F. Jenkins

1. 1965–1972, REMEMBERING CORN HILL AND TRURO

It must have long been in the back of my mind that if I wanted to go somewhere to be myself, to be free, it would be Provincetown. Augusts, throughout my teens, my family vacationed on Corn Hill and in Truro, in outermost cottages that overlooked the bay. For weeks we ran around barefoot, unsupervised, our wild, uncombed hair streaked from the sun and sea. I don't remember actually bathing during those holidays, although I rarely took off my bathing suit. The sand wound into our hair and nestled into our creases, and salt glimmered across the surface of our limbs and faces, and nights, we slept deeply and soundly, knowing we were home at last.

On our summer Cape vacations we did what we wanted, and were accountable to no one. There was no one to call out as authority and no one to hate or spoil the party. Our dad himself turned into a big kid, going off early to fish, my brothers in tow, digging up clams he later boiled and served up for us as chowder. Once in a while, when our friends, the Sabos or Pocobellos, happened to vacation at the same time with us on Corn Hill, the bunch of us kids trekked together to P-town.

My sisters, Mar and Ale, and brothers, John and Bill, and I dragged along Ann Marie, Todd, and Tony. Tearing off our footgear, we disappeared in a long yell over the dunes through the tall eelgrass. A magnificent, strange tower beckoned us at the end of the Cape's hook, and we headed there as if toward some promise.

We zigzagged from the beach to the road to sand, dodging traffic as we attempted to trace the pale dividing line of 6A so we could keep our bare soles cool. When we reached the Holiday Inn, we stepped down rocks to the beach and then raced one another, shoving whomever we could into the bay. We arrived in just our bare skins, it seemed, starved for ice cream.

2. 1973, "LOVE'S THEME" IN PROVINCETOWN

My first thought driving down Commercial Street on a windy, bitterly cold November night was that I had missed the party. The benches before Town Hall sat empty. There was no turbaned, six-foot diva wearing high heels and glitter and waving flyers before the Crown & Anchor complex, no colorful passing crowd, just a lone woman limping toward me along the sidewalk with a cane, her long hair flitting like a torn banner in the wind. I stopped the car to ask her about jobs in town and wound up giving her a ride to her house and getting an invitation to crash at her place after I had visited the bars to inaugurate my arrival.

The next morning, over tea and honey in her kitchen nook, Sandy gave me the lowdown on cheap rentals and the fish factory.

"There's lots of townies, gays, and transients there, the pay's pretty good. You just got to go by the rules." There was the one word I had never expected to hear in this place—rules.

The idea of a factory job, something so different from what I'd grown up associating with work, titillated my imagination. Until then, I'd only worked as a receptionist in my dad's corporate office in Greenwich and a couple of months as a salesgirl at a gift shop. A factory job, I thought, would be fun.

That very day I found a room on Standish Street for twenty-five dollars a week and a job at the fish factory. I could barely understand the eighty-something manager, Joe, who both slurred and barked his words. But he handed me a W2 form, saying, "7:30, Monday, be *heah*," so I knew I had a job. I bought a navy bandana, a pair of rubber boots, and some work gloves at the local army-navy store, then headed to the MS Bar. I was sure the eighty dollars I had in my pocket, money saved from my days at the gift shop, would be enough to party with *and* carry me through to my first paycheck. The bar scene was where everything happened. I heard Piggies on Shank Painter Road was the best dance bar, where gays and straights intermingled, so I had to go.

Piggies was a Toulouse-Lautrec painting come to life. Farthest away at a distant table sat a gaggle of African Americans in military uniforms. To the left, lean, long-haired men wearing jeans and tie-dyed T-shirts groped one another at the bar. To my right, women in long skirts and beaded necklaces danced in a circle. One woman smiled at me, grabbed my wrist, and pulled me into the circle. We turned together, tossing back our heads, our eyes flitting across the high wood beams of the ceiling.

Maggie and I left together at closing time. She lived in a trailer on somebody's property set back on a hill along Commercial Street. We sat in it in the buff, smoking cigarettes and chatting about the night and music. Then, in a moment of stillness and quiet when all you could feel was the trailer being



The house on Corn Hill where the author spent most of her Augusts, from 1965 to 1970

shaken by wind, I felt so high and happy, I decided to walk outdoors naked, just to commemorate the moment. I stepped gingerly over patches of snow to Commercial Street, where wind was beating up wooden signs. Even Front Street restaurant's heavy Tarot Hermit sign swaggered and creaked. There wasn't a soul anywhere at that 4 a.m. hour but me.

3. DANCING AND DREAMING

Work at the fish factory was like "street" school. I liked getting up at dawn, no matter when I'd gotten home the night before, and strutting the quiet streets to work in my coveralls and rubber boots in time to music I'd heard the previous night—Harold Melvin and the Blue Notes' "The Love I Lost," the O'Jays' and Barry White's tunes still playing in my head. I could keep myself happy and entertained remembering that music, no matter what was going on.

The fish factory was a world of its own. On the first floor, you were immediately overwhelmed by the stench of fish mixed with the smell of the ammonia thrown regularly onto the cement floor to clean up and kill the fish scent. I started there, snipping fish tails and heads and cleaning hair from the underbellies of whiting and leaning over a huge vat of fish guts, while surrounded by transients, gays, and townies. I recognized some from Piggies. We all worked steadily, no chatter. Sometimes, when I looked up, I met somebody's eye and felt that we shared not only the same work but also the same hangover.

On the second floor, we packed lobster tails, and sometimes I snuck a few into my pockets. I knew lobster tails were a delicacy but had never tasted them, so, after work one day, my friend Ellie and I headed over to the local deli, where Constance, an easy-going Ethiopian, boiled up our lobster tails behind the counter. We sat at one of the small tables, dipped them in melted butter, and devoured them with BYOB beer.

The third floor was a dark Frigidaire, where you stood on a cement floor, panning fish for freezing

all day—six triangular slices to a pan. Once in a while, you were allowed a smoke break around the one small heater. One day, after a break, Joe caught me panning fish with one hand while smoking with the other and suspended me for a week.

Among the fish factory's stock of characters were Moon and Dread. Moon had short, mussed hair and a red face, puffy from drink. Dread had missing teeth, coke-bottle glasses, and long stringy hair, and when you talked with her, she stepped up close, squinting, like, "You're not even thinking of messing with me or my girlfriend, are you?" At the 3 p.m. break, the two whipped out their homegrown pot and homemade wine to share. All the young people at the factory, all the transients and gays, got high together every day, thanks to Moon and Dread.

I came to love the *fuckin' fish factory*, its characters and their stories, and grew to respect the *Portagee*, the suspicious, hardworking locals, mostly past seventy, who had been there forever and were tight as a knot. At break time, the women sat in a row on a bench in the locker room, their gnarly hands stone-like on their laps, eyeing you with pinched stares like they knew you were up to no good. They never cracked a smile, were truly rugged, and knew you were only there for the ride, just passing through. The transients came from all over. Some, like Moon and Dread, made out like outlaws and maybe were. Some, like Ellie and me, were just bored kids, hungry for adventure. I liked the idea that you could get high at work, any time of day.

At lunch, Ellie and I would buy a quart of beer, yogurt, and nuts and hang on the beach if it was sunny, or at her place, if it was not. She lived in a small bright box of a room on Mechanic Street, closer to the factory. After work, on the way home, I stopped at Perry's Liquors to buy my "cocktails," three shots of bourbon for a buck, and a half gallon of cheap Tavola Red wine. I shared the wine with Ellie while we talked about Erica Jong's *Fear of Flying*, the feminist rage then, and what we imagined for our futures. I wanted to write. Ellie, a Vermonter, dreamed of joining a commune.

4. STRIPPING AWAY THE PAST

I related to Provincetown's brand of crazy, having grown up in dysfunction and drama myself. My mother suffered from depression, which was exacerbated by having to raise five kids mostly on her own while my father was away. In a household that had been out of control, I had always felt I had to be in control, but in Provincetown I felt I could embrace madness, somehow make it my own. How else did one grow into the world except by accommodating to madness? I'd run from my family, and from anyone who could tell me what to do, to a place that was vague on ambition and wild on fancies—and, as it turned out, mostly what I wanted to do with my life was party. That, I felt, was my real mission, and I was not alone.

Nighttime in Provincetown was surreal. Gay guys owned the Back Room of the Crown & Anchor complex, but on holidays, everybody partied there. Sunday afternoons in the winter, the bartender lit a fire and played opera and classical music, providing a serene, almost heady respite.

It was the year the AMA determined gays weren't sick after all. The declaration brought a flurry of sarcastic jokes from those in the bars who'd been out for years. What would that stamp of approval do for them, or any of us? Life would continue as it was for those who had been out of the closet, living in Provincetown. I kept thinking a rebel's life shouldn't aim to please or be acceptable to anyone. It meant defying norms, even the culture of labels

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A view of P-town harbor, as it looked circa 1976

that consigned you to a group and stamped you with a set definition.

5. STAKING MY CORNER OF THE UNIVERSE ON STANDISH

I met Joan, my future roommate, at one of Napi's parties. With his gray-flecked beard and pseudo-intellectual rap, Napi Van Dereck was at the center of many gatherings. He was deep into Nietzsche and let me borrow his paperback of *Will to Power*, which led me to ponder the idea of self-realization. I determined that experience was my teacher, and Provincetown, after all, my college of choice, where I finally felt open to learning.

Joan and her three-year-old lived across the street from Napi's in the corner house on Standish Street. We exchanged stories. She had escaped New York to get away from a heroin-addicted boyfriend and a rat-infested apartment, where her kid's bed had been the bathtub. Compared to that, the rickety house on Standish Street was a dream. She was also looking for a roommate.

The old house on Standish had charm, although it was a challenge just getting inside the front door as the house was under construction. As long as I lived there, it was "under construction." Once you managed to get through the main entrance, you climbed about a dozen steep steps to get into the

kitchen with its slanted floors. There was never any heat, something that barely fazed me as I spent all day at the fish factory and most nights in the bars. By the time I got home, I was too soused to care about the cold. Joan kept the kitchen warm though, turning the oven on full blast, so I often found her swathed in a blanket and sitting in front of the oven, her stocking feet deep in its belly.

Another dozen rickety steps up and you arrived in the attic, my space, where I had set down a hand-me-down mattress and a pillow and sleeping bag I'd brought with me and arranged some shelves for books and clothes, using bricks and planks. The windows on either side were tall and beveled and let in lots of light during the day and moonlight at night. At eighty dollars a month, that room was a rip-off, but, at the time, I felt on top of the world living there.

Near dawn, while most of the world slept, the guys in our basement apartment, a cook and fisherman, had their knock-down, drag-out fights, flinging pots and pans at one another, literally shaking the house. Eventually, Chris stumbled out, short black hair akimbo, dressed in his yellow rubber coveralls and high black boots. Through my window I watched him weaving along the side street, heading toward his tugboat in the harbor.

Then it was just me and the receding night and sleep that would not come. I wrote poems then by candlelight and dreamed about tomorrow, my head resting against the farthest corner of the window so I could make out the inch-long stretch of horizon between buildings and the first light of dawn. ■

ARYA F. JENKINS is a poet and writer whose work has appeared in journals such as *Agave Magazine*, *Brilliant Corners*, *Cleaver Magazine*, and *the Feminist Wire*. Her poetry recently received a *Pushcart* nomination, and her poetry and essays have been included in three anthologies. Her poetry chapbook, *Jewel Fire*, was published by *Allbook Books*. She writes short stories for *Jerry Jazz Musician*, which commissioned her to write jazz fiction. Flash fiction is forthcoming in the *Feminist Wire*, and poetry in *Blue Heron Review*. Her poetry chapbook, *Silence Has a Name*, has been accepted for publication by *Finishing Line Press*.

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DAVID ARMSTRONG

(1954–2014)

This essay is adapted from an article that appeared in Artforum magazine on November 14, 2014.

The first, most distinctive thing you noticed about David Armstrong upon meeting him was his voice. It had not so much an accent as a sort of wistful cadence. It sounded like a mother comforting a child she is preparing to suffocate with a pillow.

I met David in the summer of 1981 in Provincetown. He was staying at the home of a man named Paul Johnson, a sparkly eyed clammer whose house had many areas of old wallpaper that David used to beautiful advantage in a number of his classic photographs. The first thing I noticed about Johnson was that he had a tattoo. (In 1981, not everyone had a tattoo, no “normal” people had tattoos. Now normal people have tattoos on their necks.) Paul’s was an apple, underneath which was written in that old-timey tattoo cursive the name Eddie. It was on his wrist. It couldn’t have been covered by a sleeve. The other thing was, it had faded and blurred in that way that meant it had been there a long time. Do you understand what I mean by describing this to you?

David lived at that time in New York, where, I knew from the legend that preceded him, he was an exhibited photographer and knew all the important punks and New Wavesters. He was tall, kind of disheveled, and not exactly punk or New Wave-looking. I remember finding this odd. A New Wave look at that point seemed to me a very important thing to have. I think, for David, it was a discarded trope. In the same way, odd as it is, he seemed so much older than I, even though he was twenty-seven, and I was twenty-one. This was not just because of his mantle of New York experience. It also had to do with his finely honed knowledge. At that point, I had met and savored old queens who talked about Garbo and Dietrich like they knew them personally. David could talk about the courts of Marie Antoinette and the Romanovs like he had been there.

Later that fall, David came to visit us—Mark Morrisroe, Stephen Tashjian, a.k.a. Tabboo!, and me—in Boston, where we were living at 85 Park Drive. He brought a box of 16 by 20 inch black-and-white prints that perhaps he had been storing in Boston someplace, or maybe he was still printing at the Museum School on the sly. In any case, it was the first we’d seen of his work other than the full-page picture of Evan and John Lurie that had been used as the advertisement in *Artforum* magazine for Diego Cortez’s “New York/New Wave” exhibition at PS1. There weren’t as many opportunities for publishing images then. Everybody and their brother didn’t have books of their photographs, and there was no Internet.

The visit lifted the veil on his genius. This was work that stood among the masters. I liked it more than Robert Mapplethorpe and almost as much as Diane Arbus. I had not yet discovered Peter Hujar. I had not yet discovered Bronzino, for that matter. David inculcated me in his work, as well as Guido Reni’s—the history of portraiture pervades Armstrong’s art. It didn’t really matter what I thought. I was a kid from the sticks beginning my second year of art school. He seemed charmed by my adoration, though, and I appreciated being taken seriously.

David, I realized almost immediately upon hearing of his death, was the least judgmental person I had ever known and—considering his milieu—the least elitist. One of his best friends and divine models was this wretched girl who was a real “thief



PHOTO BY JACK PIERSON

and a shitkicker,” to borrow a phrase from the movie *Female Trouble* (which was a common thing for David to do). This girl could have stepped out of a Reynolds painting; she had a face like a porcelain doll and would have taken the gold out of your teeth while you were still breathing. David loved her and loved the people she stole from. It didn’t occur to him to alter his opinion based on morals. This is not to say he never said an unkind word. In fact, he was at his most delightful when he did. Which was quite a bit, come to think of it, before I paint him as Peg o’ My Heart in his absence. I’m quite sure he wouldn’t like that. However, he didn’t care what anyone did or who anyone “was” or, for that matter, if they were beautiful or not.

We took a walk through the Fens to a package store for a bottle of gin. At twenty-two, I still thought in terms of “drinks”: a gin and tonic, a gimlet, and (maybe it came later) a negroni. As we left the shop, having purchased a fifth with pooled funds, he said, “What are you waiting for?” I said, “What do you mean?” He said, “Crack that bottle, I want a swig!” Of warm gin? I thought. No mixer, no ice, no lime?! He handed me the bottle. Ugh. I drank it anyway. Just to be cool.

I could tell you more stories about how he made my life a more interesting place. So could a thousand people who were his friends. Everyone who ever knew him knows they encountered someone really extraordinary. He was a hard worker, although he gave the impression of being constantly in repose. The work really speaks, whistles, sings, mourns, and cries out for itself. I have attempted over the years to copy it and found it can’t be done.

When I was young and he was twenty-seven, I thought of him as old; I’m now fifty-four, and he’s dead and seems even older. Funny how that works. All I can say in closing is: If you never met him, you got screwed. — Jack Pierson

GEORGE BRYANT

(1937–2015)

Provincetown lost much of its historical memory when George Bryant passed away this year. He was still young at seventy-seven, recalling in detail the people and passions that populated the events of his lifetime, as well as the older stories of the harbor, the local wharves, now destroyed by storms, the saltworks and fish-packing industries that were our working waterfront. He was a Provincetown native who learned the ways of the wider world, earning a master's degree in architecture from MIT, serving in the Peace Corps in Peru, and speaking Spanish to the airport controller when he flew airplanes over mountains. His family had a formidable property along a stretch of the East End in the vicinity of the Provincetown Art Association and Museum, where residents and visitors bought provisions at Bryant's Market, now Angel Foods, which was the Dean & Deluca of its day.

George's knowledge extended deeply into the family roots of Provincetown's inhabitants, and this oral history is available to us today in a Vimeo



PHOTO BY MISCHA RICHTER

tour of the local cemetery, where he discourses at length about the life of each soul at rest under the grass where he steps. Using his expertise in architecture, George inspected many structures for their enduring integrity and left his mark on our physical history. In 1985, when the fish-packing

plant was about to be demolished to make way for a new pier, George advocated that the massive structure be repurposed for artists' studios, writing in *Provincetown Arts*, "Provincetown has a long tradition of opening doors to citizens who wish to work. It is almost necessary in a community that is as geographically isolated as ours. The town acquired the MacMillan Wharf rights sixty years ago to ensure an access to the sea for fishermen. The Seafood Packers building is no longer needed as a fish house. Would it be unreasonable to assert that it now be the artists' turn to use this bulky gray landmark?" This memory is now preserved in the work of Provincetown painters—for years, the motif was painted by artists such as Arthur Cohen and Paul Resika.

And, as for the enthusiastic collecting that George pursued, filling up open spaces on his property behind fences, the artist Karen Cappotto observed, "As a collagist who gathers found materials to add new layers of meaning, with joy in my heart, I am so proud to say that this map or that old playbill came from the collection of George Bryant." — CB

JOHN GRILLO

(1917–2014)

I am lucky to have grown up being exposed to the arts. Since my early childhood, my father took my older brother, Kurt, and me to visit his exhibitions, museums, and galleries in New York City and New England. He told me how to look at paintings, how colors and shapes related to one another and how he would place them on a canvas. I learned to appreciate fine art and look at paintings more deeply. He also taught me how to know the difference between what was copied or superficial and what was real and authentic.

My brother and I got to witness our father work in his studio, painting with great energy and passion, layering luminous colors onto the canvas. This left an indelible impression on our young minds. Not only did we watch him work, he gave us materials that we used to experiment and create on our own.

As a professor, he generously shared his ideas and knowledge, some of which he had learned from

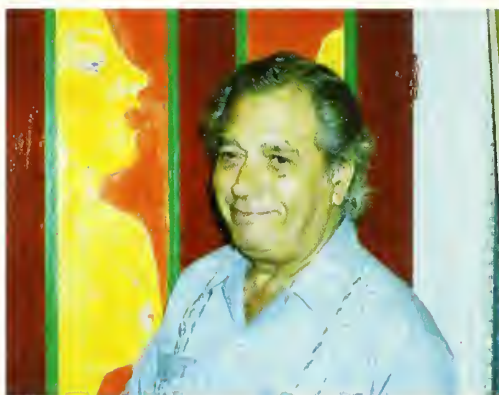


PHOTO BY CHRISTOPHER BUSA

his experience with Hans Hofmann in the 1950s in New York City and Provincetown—my father once told me that he and Hans Hofmann influenced each other. On April 17, 2015, as a tribute to my father, the University of Massachusetts Amherst, where he taught for over twenty-five years, dedicated a painting studio with a plaque in his memory.

My father made his summer studios in Provincetown from the 1950s through the '60s, including an

isolated fisherman's shack overlooking the sea and accessible only by foot, one and a half miles over the sand dunes. The sun, the sea, and the special light of this magical place, I feel, played a role in his yellow atmospheric paintings of the 1960s. In the 1980s, he traveled to Colombia, which influenced some of his Figurative and landscape works. He continued to create and express himself through his work, actively painting and reinventing himself even a week before he passed away.

My father has inspired my life in many ways, creatively and spiritually, through his painting and relentless drive. Although he is not here physically, he will always live on through his vast body of work, which is full of intensity, love, and light.

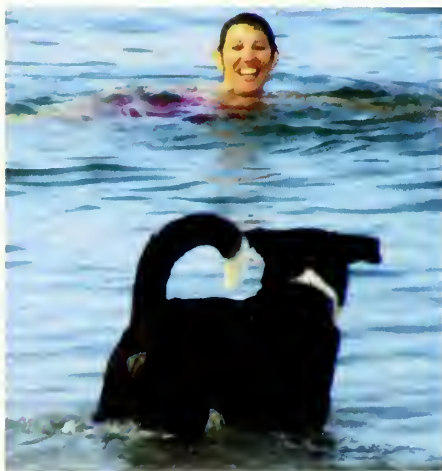
— Jamieson S. Grillo

John Grillo is currently represented by the David Findlay Jr. Gallery in New York City; Robert Green Fine Arts in Mill Valley, California; David Hall Fine Art in Wellesley, Massachusetts; and the Cove Gallery in Wellfleet, Massachusetts, at which there will be an exhibition this summer.

NICOLETTA POLI

(1958–2014)

Nicoletta Poli was only fifty-five when she succumbed to cancer, which she concealed from her many friends, painting crisp evocations of the human figure, bathed in happy colors and lusting for life. Her Italian-American origins, though darkened with tragedies, sustained her sunny optimism. A lover of animals, she rescued abandoned dogs and began incorporating them into her paintings. Pet owners approached her seeking portraits of their dogs, and a new branch of her career flourished. In the introduction to



her book, *Poli's Dogs* (www.pequodbooks.com), published in 2012, she wrote:

I've been painting dogs for the last twenty years—primarily mine. They love me, and I love them; that makes them the best subject to paint. Being a painter, I have the advantage of transforming my feelings into color and shape. In this book, I've included my dogs, Luna, Pablo, and Mickey, as well as my friend Beth and her Golden Retrievers. Just a simple gesture, the shape of their noses, the white tips of their tails, it all falls into place with sea and sky. The greatest of all emotions is the love between humans and dogs.

— CB

SALLY NERBER

(1916–2014)

Sally Nerber, with quiet, casual brilliance, operated the esteemed Cherry Stone Gallery for many years in Wellfleet, exhibiting local artists with national names and fostering emerging artists who would achieve renown, such as Paul Bowen, Tim Woodman, and Christina Schlesinger. She and her partner, Lizzie Upham, who predeceased her in 1988, had unpublicized gatherings because local ordinances would not allow announcements of openings. Through Fritz Bultman, she met Robert Motherwell, who showed faithfully for many summers, along with Myron Stout, Jack Tworkov, Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns, and David Hockney. The gallery drew an eclectic circle of writers, painters, composers, and architects, whose bright talk was muffled by soft breezes rousing the leaves of nearby trees. Having been married to the editor of the art magazine



PHOTO BY VINCENT GUOAZINO

Tiger's Eye before she met Upham, Nerber drew from a wide range of cutting-edge talent.

The gallery's inaugural show featured paintings by a twenty-three-year-old Helen Miranda Wilson, who recalls, "In the summer of 1971, Sally Nerber and Liz Upham had just opened their gallery, the Cherry Stone Gallery, on Railroad Avenue in Wellfleet. That season they gave me my very first show. It was also their first show! I had grown up in the community, and so I had many people to invite and they all showed up. The opening felt exciting and marked the beginning of many years of exhibitions, for them and also for me with them. At that time, their contributions to raising the standards for showing art on the Outer Cape were invaluable. For me, it was a rare opportunity to be represented by dealers who were supportive, sophisticated, and honest. In the 1970s, most galleries in America showed few women artists, if any. This was never an issue for them. My experience with the Cherry Stone gave me a touchstone for my later, challenging experiences in the New York art world." — CB

LEONORA "NOA" HALL WILLIAMS

(1943–2014)

Few are the ones who embody mystery; the paintings that seem to breathe and mingle in the mind's eye; the people who create them. The late Noa Hall possessed such a sense of mystery, both in life and in her work as a painter. She worked in oils, from life. In her artist's statement she writes:

Light has always been the driving force in my work . . . the ephemeral shifting of light into shadow into light I find hypnotic, elusive, as solid as atmosphere. Nothing is static; nothing is what it was; dark shadows vanish in a movement of a cloud; transparent yields to opaque.

I can remember her smelling of bug spray and turpentine, her nicked easel sunk into the soft sand by Horseleech Pond, squinting from the canvas to the still water hour upon hour. Light fascinated her, especially the orange gild before sunset when the dark-brown pine-tree bark was illuminated. The locust leaves fracturing the sun's rays upon the sandy road did as well; the way light



PHOTO BY KATRINA HALL

dissipated as it fell into the pond water perhaps most of all. Her work became more abstract by most accounts. I always felt it was the thousand hours she spent watching water that caused her to focus in, as though these "abstract" paintings were, in fact, details of sunlit water, a zoomed lens into the depths where light refracts before disappearing. She stopped painting ten years before her death, to everyone's surprise but her own. In her last years, she wrote evocatively, "I want to let my paintings drift into deeper layers, so that the longer one looks at them, the more flickering shuddering contemplative life one sees."

After painting, her hands went to ceramics, working at Radcliffe Pottery in Cambridge. She felt inspired working with clay and produced many functional art pieces, from teapots to platters to plates. She loved the very fact that they didn't match, that each piece was unique.

The Outer Cape was home for her. Raised in Wellfleet, Noa always called the Cape "the most beautiful place on Earth." Her father was the painter and architect John "Jack" H. Hall, and she grew up around the great Edwin Dickinson, whom she affectionately called "Dick," and Mary "Bubs" Hackett. Later, she studied informally with artists Sidney Simon and John Bageris.

Diagnosed out of the blue with terminal lung cancer, Noa resisted words like *battle* and *fight* as she received treatment. She would instead draw her attention to the out-of-doors, the dappled light on the lawn, and the growing racemes of lilac blossoms.

Noa Hall succumbed to lung cancer on May 14, 2014, at the age of seventy-one years, nine months, and eight days. Her light and work continue to flicker for all who know their mystery.

— Nathaniel Hall Taylor

MARK STRAND

(1934–2014)

A sense of the surreal, one of the hallmarks of Mark Strand's poetry, characterized our relationship, which began with a case of mistaken identity at the Provincetown Airport, in 1974, when Annabelle Hebert, then director of the Fine Arts Work Center, inquired if I were Mark Strand. Hebert was there to take him to his lodgings across the street from the Apple Tree Cottage, which he had just vacated, and where I would be living.

Eventually, our paths crossed and Mark gave me a copy of his book of poems, *Darker*, whose psychological tenor immediately appealed to me. I wanted to hear more and we worked out an exchange: he would share thoughts about poetry with me and I would teach him what I knew about tennis.

We drove to Hyannis weekly, and I came to know the man and his favorite poems (e.g., Hardy's

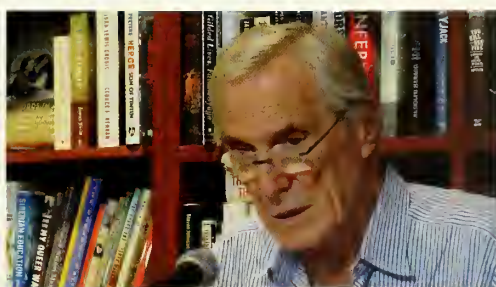


PHOTO BY NATASHA SHARYNOVA

"Afterwards"); I taught him a few concepts (such as the increased ball control that would result from a prolonged linear segment—stroking through three balls instead of one during the hitting phase).

Once, when Mark had a respiratory infection, I prescribed an antibiotic (although internal medicine is outside my usual bailiwick) and he had almost immediate relief; he likened my skills to those of his father's doctor, who sounded like a miracle man. Thereafter, Mark seemed to regard

me with a sense of awe, and for my part, never before having met a bona fide poet, his feelings were reciprocated.

Lines from one of Mark's poems come to mind:

. . . a man wearing a dark coat and broad-brimmed hat appeared under the trees in front of my house. The way he stared straight ahead and stood, not shifting his weight, letting his arms hang down at his side, made me think that I knew him. But when I raised my hand to say hello, he took a step back, turned away, and started to fade as longing fades until nothing is left of it.

If Mark is the poem's speaker and I the man in the dark coat, I did not take a step back and turn away, but Death took a step forward and, I feel, perhaps mistook him for me, being three years his senior, just as Annabelle mistook me for him twenty-five years before.

Mark Strand had an impressive presence on and off the tennis court, and my longing for it and for him do not fade. — Michael Sperber, MD

SELINA TRIEFF

(1934–2015)

In 1985, Selina Trieff ambled into my office at Graham Modern Gallery in New York City, handed me her slides, and asked in her quiet, unassuming voice, "Would you like to come to see my paintings?" Well, in fact, I was immediately intrigued, but I was also mired in launching a new gallery while renovating it and creating clients and press. So I asked Selina to call me soon. And she did, and she did, and she did, as I kept saying yes. I'm *still* very interested, I just can't "clear the air" to get there. Until finally, I *did*. And the deep connection I felt to her art then remains fresh and stimulating to me to this day. For there has always been, since I've known Selina, a mystique about her and her paintings.

Selina and I worked on dozens of shows together, in both Provincetown and New York, and still, her paintings are as fresh, enticing, beautiful, and endearing as the day I first saw them, now over thirty years ago. Her visually sumptuous paintings remain mesmerizing, the paint so tactile that it usually sets up a tingling in my fingers when I look at it. And it has always come with a challenging edge that reveals a profound inner truth.

Selina Trieff was a woman of kindness and courage, insight and laughter. Very serious, very funny. Very persistent! The persistence that kept her calling me for six months also kept her working daily throughout her life, even as she raised a family, taught art in college, suffered a long and painful illness.

Selina once said: "From Reinhardt and Rothko I learned that art is a philosophical exploration and that art-making involves a mysterious process of self-discovery . . . and from Hofmann, I learned how to construct a painting."

Yes, Selina absorbed much from these masters, but with a wisdom and talent that were completely her own. What I find so fascinating is that Selina may have learned "self-discovery" from the teachings of Rothko, but her art, in fact, sets up a



PHOTO BY PHIL SMITH

mysterious process of self-discovery within each of us, the viewers. And, as we become more familiar with her figures and animals, somehow we open to deeper and deeper revelations within ourselves.

After all these years, I'm just beginning to understand the ongoing mystery of a Selina Trieff painting. She paints the duality of life. As she once said: "The animals I paint—the chickens for instance are fun, they are goofy—they are two different types of work. The sadness of being comes in the figure paintings, and the funny part of life, that comes out in the animals. It's almost like R & R, painting the animals, it's a lot more relaxing. But the figure is almost a spectre. At times they frighten me, those figures, but I feel that's good!" (Gillian Drake, *Cape Arts Review*)

With her introduction into the mainstream art world by Graham Modern in 1986, Selina,

then fifty-three, finally received the recognition she deserved. John Russell of the *New York Times* reviewed her first show, dubbing Trieff, "An American Original . . . she is in a class of her own." And, in his enthusiasm of discovering her luscious painting, he forgot he'd already assigned Vivien Raynor to review her show. So, on Friday morning, we were all amazed to find that Selina had received not one, but *two* reviews in the very same issue of the *New York Times*!

This duality of reviews didn't surprise me, for so much of Selina's work magically explores the phenomenon of the duality in our lives—relationships of self to self, self to family, self to others; reality/fantasy; gender/non-gender; human/animal; life/stage; arrogance/humility; joy/fear. With her sensuous paint, Selina established herself as an important, unique artist, going her own way, and gently taking us with her. Her infectious smile, kind heart, and spry wit touched us all deeply. We could not get enough of her or her art.

She was, quite simply, "Our Selina" and she was a treasure to so many of us. Her magic came not only from her ability to turn paint and gold leaf on canvas into something mystical and sublime but also from

the very essence of who she was. She always cared about the feelings of the person in her presence and, if that was you, you felt blessed to be there with her. She made you laugh and made you think. She went out of her way to draw you in, allowing each of us to share and experience her light. Her compelling paintings are imbued with that light, that insight and awareness of the ages.

"Our Selina" radiates from my walls and within my heart. Toward the end of her career, she may have had difficulty walking, but she continued to wield her brush with the flourish of youth to her last day. The power of her spirit is astonishing. It is a pleasure and an honor to be able to play in Selina Trieff's imaginative world.

— Berta Walker

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CONRAD MALICOAT

(1936–2014)

This is an excerpt from a speech by Mark Protosevich at a memorial celebration for Conrad Malicoat at the Provincetown Art Association and Museum on November 30, 2014. Family members attended, including Conrad's wife, Anne Lord, and his three daughters: Robena Malicoat and her husband, Mark Protosevich, of Provincetown; Galen Malicoat and her husband, Beau Valtz, of Wellfleet; and Bronwyn Malicoat and her husband, Michael Bois, of Provincetown.

Good morning. I'm Mark, Robena's husband. On behalf of the Malicoat family, I'd like to welcome you all to Conrad's memorial, a day of celebration of his life and his spirit. And we want to thank you for journeying here from near and far, and really hope to make this a joyful day. So, thank you and welcome.

Fifteen years ago, I met Robena in Los Angeles, and we had a bit of a whirlwind romance. She was coming here for Christmas, and I was going to visit my family in Chicago, and we decided to spend New Year's together. And so I flew out here. I'd never been here before, and I realized at some point that it was not just us spending the weekend together. I was going to meet the whole family. And I was going to meet the parents, which, in any budding romance, is a bit of a nerve-wracking experience. And so we were all going to have dinner together on New Year's Eve night, and we did, at Robena's studio, which used to be Phil's studio, and it's kind of a magical place. And I met Annie and Conrad and instantly felt welcome. There was nothing to fear. Very early on, I knew that.

There was something about the spirit of the whole evening that was really beautiful. It was fun, it was exciting, it was interesting. There was a quality that really endeared me not just to Robena but to the family. And a large part of that was Conrad. There was such a warm, welcoming, generous spirit to him even then. It was a very attractive quality. There was something about Conrad that just had this natural charisma and you enjoyed being with him. And Conrad and I became friends. I should point out that I came up to visit for that holiday weekend and I pretty much never left. So I've been a washashore from 1999 until now. I wish sometimes



PHOTO BY HARRIET JERUSA KORIM

there were a better term than "father-in-law" because it makes it sound like some kind of a legally binding contract instead of a warm, affectionate bonding. It should be "father-in-love" or something.

Conrad in a lot of ways became my liaison to Provincetown. He took me to the Beachcombers, where I became a member. I got to know a lot of people in this room. And so he was sort of a key figure in introducing me to the community and also understanding the history of Provincetown. And Conrad would tell me great stories about growing up here, some of which are well known—diving for coins off a pier, carrying people's baggage to their hotels for money, playing on a basketball team. You got a really rich sense of art and history and the quality of the town and it was through Conrad that I learned a lot of that.

In some way, I felt as if Conrad was like the living embodiment of Provincetown. Everywhere you went, people knew him. Everybody had a story, everybody had a connection. You felt that spirit with the whole town. And in thinking about today, and thinking about Conrad, a lot of what came up to me—and it's especially fitting that we're here

in the Art Association—is that I started thinking about what it means to be an artist, and what Conrad brought in terms of being an artist. And I think that the thing that impressed me the most is that Conrad did what he did because he loved doing it. It was not out of a desire for fame, or for money, or for recognition, or for praise. He loved doing what he did. He loved creating things. He loved drawing, he loved sculpting, he loved working with wood. Doing anything, even if it was just sitting around—it was something he just needed to do.

And it wasn't out of any sense of objective. It was very pure and there was something lovely about it because it was really about joy. And that's so much of what I think about when I think about Conrad—he was filled with joy. There was no tortured artist there. I think he would laugh at that concept. He wasn't worrying about: "Am I good enough? Is this going to sell? What's so-and-so doing down the street that's getting recognition?" There was no thinking along those lines. There was no pettiness. There was no fear. There was no worry. There was just this love of life. And also it wasn't just art. It was music and dancing and playing chess. Going oystering. Coming back and making a good meal. Taking a nap. These were all things that were important to him. He just lived life.

This was from my observation only. I can't speak for what went on inside his head, of course—no one can. But I never had a sense that Conrad had regrets or remorse, wishing he had done this, or wishing he had done that. I think if there was introspection, it was in terms of realizing what a wonderful life he had and what a wonderful family he had. And I think that the most important thing for him was that sense of family. Extended family. Close family. Grandchildren. And part of the reason why Robena and I chose to live here, to stay here, was because that sense of family is so strong. And it's a really beautiful thing, and I think that was probably what Conrad took the most pride in. I just want to say for myself, and I think I can speak for Beau and Mike, that it's really a blessing to be part of it. To be part of the Malicoat family. I'm very thankful, and I just wanted to say that on this day.

— Mark Protosevich

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